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MADAM YOKO, OUR PARAMOUNT CHIEFTAINESS, MENDI TRIBE

EVERYDAY LIFE

AMONG

THE HEAD-HUNTERS

AND OTHER EXPERIENCES
FROM EAST TO WEST

BY

DOROTHY CATOR

WITH 34 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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C292

TO

MY MOTHER

AND TO

J. I. B., F.R.G.S.

15936

INTRODUCTION

AS I have travelled where no other white woman has ever been, and lived among practically unknown tribes both in Borneo and Africa, I have often been asked to write a book; but till now I have wisely refused, as I have no idea how it ought to be done. I have a hazy notion that I ought to know all about prehistoric and glacial periods, whereas they convey nothing to my mind; and the subject of composed and decomposed porphyrite rocks and metamorphic states is unintelligible gibberish to me: so if this ever appears in print, please don't expect too much.

D. C.

August, 1905

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EVERYDAY LIFE AMONG THE HEAD-HUNTERS

CHAPTER I

EN ROUTE TO BORNEO

A FEW years ago Borneo was believed to have a brilliant future before it, and Dick was supposed to have done very well for himself when he went out as a cadet in the British North Borneo Government.

He did not at once find diamond mines outside his door, which was disappointing, but he thought it good enough after three years to come home on "urgent private affairs" to fetch me.

We were married in London, and left England the same day, and with all respect to Dick I can honestly say it was the most miserable day of my life. I moved and smiled and played through it all somehow, but the only reality about me was an

unbearable pain at leaving home. I must have been a most amusing companion !

We left Marseilles two or three days afterwards on one of the Messagerie boats for Singapore, but we broke our journey at Alexandria, and went up to Cairo, joining another boat on the same line a week later.

It was all new and most interesting, the fleet of little boats which shot out one after another from the wharf the first moment they caught sight of us, and the crowd of black beings swarming on to our steamer directly it stopped, chattering and screaming over our baggage, and in their anxiety to get our custom grabbing at everything we wished them to leave alone : the quiet cool night journey to Cairo through date palms and rice fields, quite flat, but weirdly picturesque by moonlight ; and then modern Cairo with its luxurious and brilliantly lighted hotels, and latest Paris fashions, side by side with the Cairo of a few thousand years ago. The brilliance of the present life, here one moment and gone the next, leaving no trace behind it, spending all its money and energy and strength with the magnificent aim of never having a moment unamused, contrasting strangely with ancient Cairo which in the Sphinx and Pyramids has written its undying

history and reared its matchless monuments to all time. We call those days barbaric and these civilised. I wonder whether we are right.

We then went to Colombo, staying a few hours at Suez and Aden on our way.

The banks of the Suez Canal, with its camels and flowing-gowned Arabs, are exactly like a series of Old Testament pictures. Manners and customs in the East have evidently not changed in the same way that ours have. In Ceylon we had to say good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Talbot and Miss Grimston. We haven't seen them since, but I am always hoping we shall meet somewhere, as they made all the difference to our journey.

My first impressions of life on board ship were very funny. An old Turkish vizier got off at Colombo, who had made himself very agreeable to me. He couldn't understand my daring to go to the other end of the world alone with my husband, but he told me my eyes were like stars, my teeth like pearls, and my hair golden as the setting sun, which showed a more than vivid imagination, but was quite pleasing, except to Dick, who only looked on him as a dirty old man. To speak truthfully he wasn't very far wrong, as shipwreck had once caught him in his bath, and from that day, whenever he travelled, however

long the voyage, he abjured all water, and never undressed for fear of the same disastrous consequences.

You always meet some people on board different from anyone you have ever met on land, and the sameness of a long journey is certainly varied by watching their peculiarities, which generally show themselves in a mania for one of four things—drinking, gambling, flirting, or praying. Excess in all four is constantly going on at one and the same time. The first two hurt the people themselves most, and the third is the most common; but to the general public the last is certainly the most trying. People who know they are saved, and who are equally certain you aren't, are great nuisances. On one of my last voyages we had two little women who impressed on us that their mission was to save souls, which was certainly a splendid work, but I don't think they went about it in a way which was likely to ensure them much success.

They prayed in public, however inconvenient the time; they brought a Bible always into *table d'hôte*, though they had such enormous appetites that they had absolutely no time to use it, and they sang hymns with shut eyes to drown, if possible, a gramophone which had been wound up and set

going with comic songs. A gramophone is ugly enough at any time, but accompanied by hymns it becomes most painful. The tracts, too, that are distributed on board are very funny. I have never forgotten one against smoking; it was the sad story of three men, two of whom died of dissipated lives at the age respectively of seventeen and nineteen, from no other cause, to begin with, than a cigarette.

But to go back to the most popular mania, there will, of course, be people who flirt outrageously on every long voyage because it's "the thing" to do. They make hopeless fools of themselves, but that they don't realise; just as many of our boys and young men behave like blackguards and ruin their families for no other reason in the beginning than that it is expected of them—it is "the thing" to do.

They have heard from their babyhood those two nauseous sentences, "Boys will be boys" and "Young men will sow their wild oats," and they want to show their true manliness, knowing that whatever they do will be condoned by a more than forgiving public opinion, which forgets that what it expects, it gets.

In Colombo we stayed just outside the town at a cousin's bungalow, in, I think, the most beauti-

ful tropical garden I have ever seen. It was a perfect night, and strolling about under the palms in the moonlight was more than refreshing after the hot, long voyage; but the next day the coaling was over, and we had to go on to Singapore, where we found there was no boat on to Borneo for nearly three weeks, so after a day or two we went to stay with some friends in Johore, which is about ten miles off on the mainland of Asia.

Except for some beautiful botanical gardens, we didn't find Singapore at all interesting. The food at the hotels is good, but the arrangements, unless they have been altered, are very primitive.

Each bedroom has a bathroom leading out of it, which also opens out of doors, so that the Chinese water-carriers can keep you well supplied. The tops of the doors are made like Venetian blinds, with no means of fastening them even on the inside, so that the Chinaman can just flip them up and look through as he passes without the trouble of coming in. I am glad he should be saved trouble, but a little consideration for our feelings would be convenient, as to be looked at by Chinamen while bathing is a form of amusement which does not appeal to me.

We went to Johore in rikshas, each drawn by

one man, who trotted up and down hill as if he had nothing behind him. Dick is nearly six feet three inches, and proportionately heavy, but they only stopped once the whole ten miles! We then had a short sea-crossing to get over to the mainland.

The water swarmed with crocodiles; the tops of their heads look like floating logs lying on the water. Johore is a lovely place, and we had a very nice time there, and were most lavishly entertained by everyone, including the old Sultan, who came to have tea with us, and invited us to come up to his palaces to see his jewellery. It was very magnificent, and worth an enormous sum of money, but the one idea conveyed by the palace we went over was that of space and emptiness—a magnificent shell, but no kernel.

No man was allowed into the harem, and it was very shy work for a lady, as the Sultan's wives all behaved like ill-mannered, giggling schoolgirls, except the second one, an Armenian, who had evidently been destined for a much nobler lot, poor thing! When the Sultan was away in England for some months she broke out of bounds, and drove about unveiled as an ordinary European lady, but she was reduced to the ranks again and shut up directly he got back from his travels.

There is plenty of big-game shooting at Johore, as it abounds with some of the finest tigers in the world. There was a nasty man-eater about when we were there, and one day, walking with our host round his tea-garden, when we were about half a mile from the house, close to thick jungle, I shall never forget his turning round quietly and saying, "It was here that tiger was last seen; it came out to our right a few days ago," pointing to a spot a few yards away. I looked at him prepared to laugh, but he wasn't joking.

It is most interesting to be walking on the spoor of a man-eating tiger, particularly when you are only armed with a walking-stick, and there is every chance of the beast, who had already taken several people, having digested his last meal and taking you too. But somehow my calves were very stiff and my back very self-conscious, and I was very thankful to get back to the house again.

The idea of a tiger slinking after you adds interest to your walk certainly, but not of a kind I am anxious to experience again without a rifle.

CHAPTER II

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF BORNEO

WE arrived in Borneo at last, after spending several days on a small steamer stinking with Chinese cargo and swarming with cockroaches. Woe betide anyone who left brushes or any other equally uneatable things about; the bristles all disappeared, and the cockroaches grew fatter day by day.

The deck was the only bearable place. We lived up there day and night, only using our cabins for a few minutes to dress—and those few minutes were far too long. We had nothing to see but occasional shoals of porpoises, which tumbled along by the side of our boat. In the Malay Archipelago these shoals are sometimes so large that they take several hours to steam through. We had a bad passage, but the captain did everything he could for us, no one could have been kinder.

We slept on the skylight, and when it was very

rough he roped me to the mast to prevent my falling about. Everyone tied up the long chairs on which they slept somehow, but one very rough night an unfortunate Dutchman, in an unwise moment, left his loose, and a bigger wave than usual struck the boat and over he went, and everything he possessed was scattered in different directions. He stalked his belongings—standing, crouching and creeping, but all equally fruitlessly; as soon as he got near anything off it plunged somewhere else. Poor man, he was very much to be pitied, but it was a good thing he hadn't time to look up, as some of the other passengers were nearly crying with laughter. A sailor eventually came to his assistance, and at last we went to sleep; but we woke up later to find an awful hubbub going on. The screw had gone wrong in the middle of a storm, and the sailors were rushing backwards and forwards and the captain roaring orders and emphasising them with most explicit language; but fortunately the screw righted itself before very long, and everything and everyone gradually calmed down, but we were none the less glad to arrive at Labuan, our first port of call.

The wharf and native town are not attractive, but the island itself is lovely, an oasis of green,

palms of every kind, and glorious trees, standing out in all their grace against a deep blue sky, and under them, on every side as far as the eye could reach, a luxuriant carpet of grass, even the roads being just glades of springy turf, perfect for riding. At one time the whole place was very prosperous, and seemed to have a great future before it; but that has not been realised, though it is still most important to us as a valuable coaling and telegraph station. Since we had a telegraph station at Labuan we are absolutely independent of lines going across foreign countries which might in case of war be cut.

The Government is administered by a Resident belonging to the British North Borneo Company, who entertained us at Government House, a very picturesque bungalow standing in large shady grounds.

We only stayed a few hours that time, but afterwards some great friends of ours lived there, and I went to stay with them, and had the interesting but very funny experience of acting as Malay interpreter in getting up a law case.

My host was a very clever pleader, much sought after by the Indians and Chinese, but he talked no Malay, and his client in this particular case was a Hindoo who could talk no English. There

was no interpreter available, so I had to fill the gap; and I had no easy work, as I only knew Malay, and my man would keep on running off into Hindustani, which was natural as it was his native language, but most muddling to his interpreter.

Two days afterwards we reached Kudat, having passed Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Borneo, on our way. It is nearly 14,000 feet high, and intensely interesting to naturalists of all kinds; its vegetation alone ranges from palms and orchids at the base to heather and Scotch firs near the summit. I don't think Dick will ever be quite happy till he has been up it; he was in Borneo for nearly six years but never managed it, as the natives were not safe, so the Governor wouldn't (I am thankful to say) let anyone attempt it.

The natives look upon it with great wonder and awe, as something which is capable of exercising a powerful influence over their lives and as a place for departed spirits. When a man is dying they talk of him as ascending Kinabalu, and in time of drought they had a most awful custom which we have, of course, put a stop to. It was called Sumunguping. When they began to be afraid that the crops would fail they felt it was absolutely necessary to have a direct messenger to

the other world in order that their case should be put clearly before the spirits who govern the rain. A chief, therefore, took one of his slaves, bound him firmly to a post, and then everyone approached armed with spears, and at every thrust gave him some special message to their spirit relations on Kinabalu!

Kudat lies at the head of a deep bay, which forms a splendid natural harbour for ships. It is a picturesque and flourishing little place, as the jungle round abounds in valuable timber, and there are good tobacco and coffee estates quite near. The country generally is very fertile, and game is abundant.

We were entertained by Dr. Chapman, a very nice friend of Dick's. He was out shooting not long afterwards with two men who had come down from Hong Kong on leave. They were going up the river in a small boat, and Dr. Chapman had rested his gun at full cock in front of him, when he suddenly saw a beast, and without thinking seized hold of the barrel and drew it quickly towards him.

It caught against something and went off, emptying the full charge into his side. He was quite collected, explained to his companions how to plug the wound, and then told them quietly

that nothing could save him, and asked them to write down, as quickly as possible, all directions about his things and messages for his people at home, and an hour or two after the shot went off died pluckily, without having given a single thought to his own pain and exhaustion.

Kudat is only 130 miles from Sandakan, but the journey took us a long time, as it is a dangerous passage full of coral reefs and submerged islands, and we went very slowly. At last, however, we arrived in Sandakan Bay, one of the finest harbours in the world, about seventeen miles long, and the entrance to it is very beautiful, with Bahalla on the right; its fine red sandstone cliffs backed with forest-clad hills rising to a height of about 800 feet.

Some time before we got abreast of the regular town, with its wharf and many of its shops and houses built in piles over the water, we saw signs of human habitations; little villages, with their prawn nets and fishing-stakes and little jetties, right down on the shore, or hidden away in the jungle and only betraying themselves by smoke and groups of cocoanut palms.

Sandakan itself straggles up a steep wooded hill, the Chinese and native town at the base; a little higher up the public buildings, Govern-

ment offices, etc., and above that, separated as far as possible from each other (a very sensible plan), the bungalows belonging to all the different officials. Ours was in a splendid position at the top of a long steep hill looking right out over the bay. It was built of wood with a palm-leaf thatch on piles about twelve or fourteen feet high. Our chickens and monkeys lived under us. The whole place, physically and morally, was an extraordinary contrast to anything of which I had ever known or heard. I don't think we could have been a much funnier mixture of nationalities, or that any other place in the world of the same size could have contained more varied types, both of mind and character; but though we only made a few very great friends, two of whom are no longer living, I never had anything but the utmost kindness from everyone in the place, with one exception—a lady, who was evidently afraid of my being spoilt.

If I am, I can only say she is absolutely clear of any suspicion of having aided in the process!

One Governor who was out there said it was no place for ladies. I can't agree with him, because every lady by her mere presence ought to help to keep up the standard of a place; but it was certainly no place for boys. We had among us

the riff-raff of the world, and boys sent out without any religion or reverence for anything above themselves, brought up by "broad-minded" parents who wished to leave them absolutely free, had nothing to fall back on, and became ready disciples to any and every blackguard who flattered their vanity. Two of these free boys had to leave the country while we were there in deep disgrace; they had drunk deeply of the cup of Bornean morals, but they had forgotten one of its most important ingredients: Be as great a villain as you like, only don't be found out.

One man who was dining with us told me that he had been manager of some estate on one of the other East Indian Islands, and when he was sent the money to pay the coolies he managed to get right away with the whole lot; and he evidently thought he had done a very clever thing, and was quite hurt when I said I didn't understand, but that it sounded to me very dishonest.

But this is only a glimpse behind the scenes; outwardly we were very nice, and like all other European communities in the Far East, where it is an understood thing that only the men should work and the ladies sleep and amuse themselves.

It was too hot for any mental exertion to be good for us, though the energy we showed in

THE HOSPITAL, SANDAKAU

OUR HOUSE-BOAT IN THE INTERIOR, WITH DYAK POLICE BOATMEN

dancing, tennis, and riding might have made some people a little sceptical as to whether our health was really in such a precarious condition as it was etiquette to think.

Our rides had rather a sameness about them, as we only had two roads, and neither of them went very far; but we had quite a good racecourse and race meetings twice a year, which were a great excitement to us all.

Our life was also varied from time to time by ships calling in, and Government House used to entertain us and them most royally; so that altogether we had a very nice time, and when we wanted a change we used to get a sailing yacht or steam launch lent us, and go off up some river or to some island not too far away. The jungle round teemed with interest, as it was full of valuable woods, and birds and beasts and butterflies of every description.

An important timber trade is carried on between Borneo and China, as the Chinese prize above all other woods the Bornean iron-wood or billian, as it is always called—a heavy, hard wood, dark sandy brown in colour, and turning with exposure absolutely black.

It is quite invaluable, as it seems indestructible whether used under water or on land. It never

warps or splits, resisting even the ravages of white ants, which is saying a great deal, as they are the most awful pests. One lady, a friend of ours, put away a tin-lined case of new house-linen for future use, and when she came to it white ants had found a flaw in the tin, and had eaten their way right through the whole box from bottom to top. Every single thing was spoilt.

There are other valuable woods; but I know nothing of them, except the ruwangs—large forest-trees, with a particularly sweet smelling, tough yellow wood, much used by the natives for making their gobongs or dug-out canoes; and, as far as beauty goes, nothing can well beat the lovely Casuarinas or mist trees, as the Malays appropriately call them.

Their language is both poetical and expressive: the literal translation of the Malay for policeman, for instance, is "all eyes," and for the sun "the eye of the day."

We didn't find many flowers; the orchid world was there, but far above our heads, though we sometimes came upon treasures of beauty in a fallen tree. But they were few and far between. There were lovely begonias of every hue and colour in some places, and pitcher plants of all sizes and varieties abounded everywhere, but they

were the only common flower. When they first open they are full of the purest fresh water, but this soon becomes poisonous, and then beetles, snails, crabs, and even birds are found inside them, which, instead of the refreshing drink they expected, have found a watery grave.

There was practically no game, big or small, close to Sandakan; for that we had to make more or less of an expedition; but we had plenty of snakes we could easily have done without. The worst were cobras and hamadryads, those fiercest of all snakes, going out of their way at times to follow and attack people; and we had the most enormous pythons, some of them over thirty feet long. We went to see one which was caught quite easily just after it had eaten a whole deer. Digestion was going on, so it was in a comatose condition and disinclined to exert itself. I am not surprised; a whole deer must be a little trying to anyone's digestion, even a python's. They are always fairly harmless so long as you don't brush against them or step on them by mistake. I have been horribly near once or twice; but the brute coils itself round its victims with such rapidity that they have no time to suffer, which is a comforting thought. The jungle is also alive with brilliant-coloured lizards. The trunks of the trees

they are specially fond of. Most of them are quite small; but the monitor lizard is about seven feet long—a harmless but very ugly brute. The natives eat them; but they can't be very wholesome, as one we saw was revelling in a dinner of high crocodile.

CHAPTER III

IN AND AROUND SANDAKAN

OUR servants were either Malays, Sulus, or Chinamen. They were all liars. There is a saying among them that if you want to make a man tell the truth you must first make him drunk; and I certainly can answer for it that sober it would be absolutely useless even to try; but Chinamen are much the best servants, only they don't like jungle work, and are generally no good at it; so we couldn't always have them, as we were so constantly away. One little Chinaman, however, always stuck to us, in the jungle and out of it. He had nothing to recommend him. He was ludicrously ugly and dirty, and we gave him notice on an average once a month; but he never went, and never meant to. He knew Malay well, and used to come and translate for me when we had a cook who could only talk Chinese. Malay, fortunately, is as easy as Hindustani, and you pick it up at once.

The cook came every morning to tell me how much he had spent at the market, and Ah Sing used to hold the door so that the cook couldn't see, and repeat in a cheery tone whatever he said, and then after every item go through extraordinary gymnastics and hideous faces to show me what a crushing liar the cook was. It was very ludicrous to watch; and it was very strange how all the prices went up when Ah Sing did the marketing himself later!

The market was a great institution, and very picturesque with its shining silver piles of fish and its baskets of vegetables and fruit. Fish was our staple food, but they were nearly all full of bones, and far nicer to look at than to eat.

The prawns were always good, and made first-rate curries. For two or three cents a day we could get fresh curry—a very different thing from our dry curries at home.

The vegetables, considering we were in the tropics, were wonderful, owing to the untiring energy and industry of the Hakka Chinese. The results they get from the barrenest, most unfertile little plots of rock land are quite extraordinary—lettuces, spring onions, marrows, cucumbers, garden eggs, beans, sweet potatoes, and various other things all flourish under their care.

Fruit is a good deal imported; but we could nearly always get pineapples, bananas, and papyas, and from time to time various other fruits, including mangoes, mangosteens, pumeloes, oranges, and durians, the best fruit in the world to those who like them. I can't eat them without feeling greedy, and there were three other people in Sandakan who felt the same, and we almost sent express messengers to each other when a durian boat came in. But it is either love or hate; there can be no medium, as they have one great drawback. They smell so awful that if you come in at one end of a street and there are durians at the other, you get out of it as quickly as possible, as you feel quite certain the drains have all gone hopelessly wrong. Nothing can exaggerate the smell. Once or twice, when Dick felt in a specially good temper with me, he sent me up some durians early in the morning, directly he went to his office; but though I ate them up at once and he didn't come back till night, he could still tell there had been durians in the house when he got back again. The only excuse that can possibly be made for those of us who liked them is that the moment you taste them you smell nothing more; so that if you live alone there is nothing selfish in eating them. But the natives are so fond of them

they give you little chance, as a very short time after a boat comes in every durian is gone. They are a big fruit, nearly as large as your head, with so hard a covering that it has to be opened with a hatchet, and right inside you find a large ball of huge seeds, each covered with a most excellent acid cream, every seed with its creamy covering making a separate division something like the pig of an orange.

But the most interesting part of the market is the people.

It gives one a splendid chance of comparing the different races. The Sulus, with their little short coats and bright green or scarlet trousers, very tight at the ankle, and sashes and brilliant head handkerchiefs, very pleased with themselves for having changed the Spanish rule of their own country for an English one.

The Spaniards are very bad colonists, cruel masters, who hate and are hated by the natives over whom they rule. In one or two of the Spanish islands near we could walk anywhere in perfect safety, but no Spaniard dared move outside the walled town in which they all lived without a guard of soldiers ; and I am not surprised, they were such brutes. One of our friends was there one day and found the Governor had strung up his cook for

hours in the most painful position because he hadn't made the curry exactly to his taste.

Then there are the Bajows, a dark-skinned, wild sea-gipsy race roving from place to place—pirates until the English arrived, and the terror of the whole coast, but now living peaceable, quiet lives, looking upon the sea and its products as their own and mixing very little with other races.

The sea abounds in treasures, as besides all kinds of fish which the Bajows had been busy catching all night, and for which they had had hard work to get a proper price from the Chinese buyers, sponges of a very good quality are found a few miles away, and oysters are numerous on the rocks all along the coast. They were nearly all sent up to China, where I hope they were enjoyed, but Europeans used to be dreadfully ill after them!

Other treasures, such as shark fins and seaweed, also found a ready sale in China.

You constantly come upon the Bajow villages in out-of-the-way places where you little expect to find any sign of human life. Far away from everywhere, a collection of these little huts appears built on piles right out over the water, and it is a very pretty sight to see their fleets of small outriggered boats with huge brilliant-coloured sails skimming past you; their sails were also occasionally made

out of split bamboos, but I think they have given that up now.

The Dyaks, too, who, with the Sikhs, form the fighting force of the country, are a splendid race, strong and well made, with bright intelligent faces and scantily clothed limbs, which show off to advantage the perfect grace of every movement, a grace of which only a well-bred savage is capable. Nature has given them the most beautiful teeth, but art, among the richer ones, has turned them into gold, which completely spoils their personal appearance. Dyaks make splendid soldiers and the best of friends, as they are faithful and trustworthy, but once their enemy I would rather not meet them. Held in with an iron hand they are very valuable, but the sight of blood intoxicates them, and when they are let go they are worse than wild beasts.

Their one weapon is a long, sheathed knife, the handle of which is often most beautifully carved, and then decorated with the hair of their victims. They show these scalps with the greatest pride, especially to the girls they hope to make their wives, as, unless they have some such proof of their valour, the chances are that they are unceremoniously refused; and just as looking at some fox's brush reminds us of a specially good day's

hunting, and we run with pleasure over the different incidents of the day, they, looking at their scalps, recall with joy every detail of their fighting, and in the case of women, butchery, so thrilling while it lasted, but so far too quickly over. They feel no remorse, only longing for another opportunity of so distinguishing themselves.

Many other nationalities were also represented in the market—Sikhs, Japanese, and several races of Chinese—all busily engaged in laying in their stores for the day.

The Chinese are divided among themselves into innumerable different clans, according to the different trades they follow, which are handed down from father to son. If the father is a shoemaker the son must be, or if the father is a silversmith the son must be the same, and so on. Your servants even don't belong to the same class; your cook belongs to one clan, your "boy" to another, your water-carrier to another, and your hammock-bearers to yet another, and their rank in society is all according to the class to which they belong. It is never etiquette to touch each other's work, and you can't make them break through these extraordinary barriers however great the need. I was quite desperate one day. I went to fetch a little ill

girl of four from her mother, who was also very ill, and no hammock-bearers were to be found anywhere; so I tried to get two boys who were standing there doing nothing to carry her for me, but they stared blankly, pretending not to understand, and wouldn't lift a finger to help, though they knew it was an urgent case.

So immovable are the dividing lines, and so varied the dialects, that you may often find Chinamen who can't understand one another and don't wish to.

No tobacco and not many other crops are grown close to Sandakan, except on the Byte estate, the proprietors of which are most enterprising and grow all kinds of things most successfully. Cocoanuts are very easy to grow, but do not yield large enough crops to pay unless they are planted so close to the sea that there is no expense of transit; and cotton does well on some hills directly after virgin jungle has been cleared, though the ground on the whole is too clayey for it. Coffee and sugar and all fibre-producing plants, including many different hemps, grew luxuriously on the Byte estate, and only those with a very short fibre are not worth cultivating. Manilla hemp produces fibre worth up to £40 a ton, and from the fibre of the Ijuk palm the natives make an

extraordinarily strong rope which the Chinese use for the cables and rigging of their junks, and also for their deep-sea fishing lines, on account of its durability and power of resisting the action of salt and fresh water. Gambier is another most satisfactory product, as it wants little capital, and is very important commercially, as besides being a valuable medicine, it is much used in dyeing and tanning. Rattans too grow splendidly, but in one of the places where they would do best, elephants absolutely refuse to let them grow. We went with a friend of ours one day to look after some young rattans he had just started, but the elephants, unfortunately, had been there before us and had trampled down the whole plantation; their hoof marks in their rage had gone deep into the ground, and not one inch had escaped. I never saw anything more deliberate; nothing round was touched, but they knew the beds were the work of man and they wouldn't have them, and they didn't. It was absolutely useless ever planting there again. We never got an elephant, which was sad, as they sometimes had splendid tusks nearly five feet long, much finer than the Malay Peninsular or Siamese ones, and occasionally they had spiral tusks which, I believe, are found in no other country, and look like throwing back to mammoth times.

CHAPTER IV

TO THE BIRDS' NESTS CAVES

ONE of our most interesting trips was to the Gomanton edible birds' nests caves. The nests are held in the highest value and considered great luxuries by the Chinese, who give enormous prices for them. Many people had seen the nests, but very few had ever penetrated as far as the caves themselves, and those people who had done so had had such hardships to encounter on their way, that we met with no encouragement when a party of seven of us, four men and three ladies, decided to try our luck.

The morning we started was pouring wet, but, nothing daunted, we all met on the wharf at about 11.30, and started our journey across the bay in a steam launch.

The Sapagay, the river we were making for, was only about eleven miles away, and in an ordinary case, shortly after passing the mouth, we should have taken to our boats, but the water was so

swollen with the rains that we didn't have to leave the launch till about 5 p.m.

Another day, when we were crossing the bay, we were going away for some little time, and we had our house-boat with our boys and all our worldly goods in tow, when a storm came on, and over the whole boat went, our boys and all our belongings tossing about on the water in hopeless confusion.

I rushed at my kodak and tried to get a photograph, but it wasn't a success, which can perhaps hardly be wondered at, as our launch was pitching up and down, and the storm was raging, and the light was decidedly bad. We lost a great deal, including Dick's gun. Mine was saved almost miraculously, but we had to go straight back to Sandakan, as our food was all gone and we hadn't a dry rag left to sleep in. This time we fared much better, and we all, including jungle-cutters and carriers (about thirty boys in all), stowed away safely into our boats soon after 5 p.m. Not for very long, however, as owing to the flooded state of the river our progress was very slow, and not only the strong current, but fallen trees, through which we had to cut our way, obstructed our passage every few minutes ; so Mr. Allard, the guiding spirit of the expedition, decided that we

were only wasting time, and we halted and tied up to the bank—none too soon, as night was already beginning to fall, which meant we only had a very few minutes in which to pitch our camp unless it was to be done in the dark. There is practically no twilight in the tropics. Night comes down like the curtain of a theatre, but we soon had a tent ready for us. The boys disappeared in the jungle and quickly brought back the necessary posts for the uprights and smaller horizontal poles to support the roof we had brought with us. It was made of split palm leaves sewn together into mats, a wonderfully waterproof covering, as, though it poured with rain all night, we kept perfectly dry.

Only the ladies were honoured with a hut, the men slept in the canoes. After dinner—a most welcome event in the day, as we had had nothing since we started and were ravenously hungry—we soon retired to bed, and slept soundly. European cooks wouldn't believe it was possible, without a fireplace or convenience of any kind, to cook and serve a dinner of several courses, and I never yet have been able to understand how Eastern cooks manage it; you order dinner and you get it, and you have no complaints, and if you are wise you never try to know any more about it. I can't help thinking that if you saw all the fingering which

must go on, your appetite, however good, would hardly stand the test.

The next morning we were up and dressed before daylight, and after coffee and fruit we packed up and started off in our canoes again; but we were only in them for a short time, as we soon arrived at the point where we had to leave the river and strike off through the jungle. We then, except for an interval for lunch, tramped steadily through the dense forest till between five and six, when to our joy, as we were beginning to feel very tired, we came in sight of the caves.

We had had a lovely walk, as men had been sent on to clear the way for us, though perhaps we could have done without rivers, which had either to be waded through or crossed on the none too broad stem of a fallen tree. Two of us followed the fresh spoor of elephants for a long way, hoping to come up with them every minute; but we saw nothing of them, and had to make our way back as best we could to the main party before we quite lost ourselves. There was nothing to be seen but monkeys, rare butterflies and birds.

Monkeys, from the orang-utan, which is the Malay for "man of the jungle," downwards, abound in Borneo, and the natives think them excellent eating, but I simply couldn't either

shoot or skin them. It was the one animal I stuck at; they are so much too human, and the more you get to know them the more you realise how closely allied they are to us.

The greatest drawback to our walk was the quantity of leeches. They are always bad enough, but that day there was absolutely no keeping them in their place. We were dressed in short skirts and knickerbockers, with putties bound closely over our stockings and boots so as to leave no crevice of any kind where the smallest leech could force its way; but there were armies of them all standing in open order on each side of our path waiting for us. Whether they had smelt us or seen us, or whether it was only instinct which told them we should be coming that way I don't know, but there they all were, throwing out their thin thready little bodies from side to side and grasping at whatever of flesh and blood came in their way. They came through the eyelets of our boots and made for any and every part of us without the least mercy. You generally feel nothing while they are actually feeding, but when they loose you—and they never do that till they have turned into what look like huge black slugs—they prick, and blood flows from the wounds they leave, which unfortunately often take to bad ways

CROSSING SWAMP

THE ENTRANCE OF THE GOMANTON CAVES

and refuse to heal. They are a real curse, and would very soon bleed anyone to death unless he could protect himself. The natives suffered fearfully, and had to take their long knives every few minutes and half cut and half scrape from their bare legs scores of these little wretches.

They were literally streaming with blood, and if many of them stopped long in any place the ground at their feet was dyed crimson. Fortunately our putties protected us to a great degree, so we arrived in very good spirits, but very hungry and tired, two of nature's needs which had every chance of soon being satisfied. It was a refreshing sight that huge dark cave buried in green. A large brilliant blue snake reared its head over the entrance and barred our way, but we soon shot it, and after a much-appreciated dinner we wandered through the cave looking for somewhere to sleep, as night had come down on us almost before we were aware of it, and our carriers had lagged behind until it was too dark to build huts. We decided at last on some bamboo resting-places put up and already used by the Budulupes, the native tribe to whom the Government farms out the nests. It is a comfort to feel that even if I haven't got their name quite right no one will know!

They weren't there themselves just then, but they had left the place very fully occupied, and we must have indeed been worn out to have been able to sleep at all!

The next morning we were up by 5 a.m., and after bathing in a river near and having our breakfast, we examined the huge cave we had been sleeping in. It was just like a magnificent beautifully proportioned cathedral, several hundred feet high, worked out of the limestone rock by the action of the sea hundreds of years before, and lit up by a large natural window four hundred feet from the ground, which filled the vastness with a dim religious light.

Morning and night we saw a most wonderful sight, myriads of bats passing in or out of the cave in a serried mass, their wings making a rushing, whirring noise as they cut through the air, something like the sound of an engine letting off steam. They started at about 5 p.m., and the stream never stopped for about fifty minutes, which gives some idea of their number. They went up to a great height in a regular spiral column, sections of them whirring round and round in circles, and then they suddenly broke up into various bodies, which dashed off to their own special hunting grounds. The cave where most

of them slept was just behind ours, but we couldn't go into it as the floor was covered with a deposit of guano many yards deep, which in a more get-at-able place would have been most valuable.

When the bats went out the swallows came in, and vice versa; but there was more irregularity about their movements, and they took longer over it, so they weren't so interesting to watch. At about 7 a.m. we started to climb up Gomanton Hill to visit the higher caves. No lady had ever attempted any of the caves before, and very few men the upper ones, so we were very pleased with ourselves.

The ascent was certainly not easy. The whole way was very steep, and we were constantly climbing, holding on for dear life to any projection or creeper. In parts it was practically perpendicular, and once or twice all footholds disappeared, and we had to climb up most insecure-looking bamboo and rattan ladders placed against the face of the bare cliff and pegged to the rock. The least false move would have landed us in eternity, so we weren't sorry when the five hundred feet were over and we found ourselves at the entrance of the upper cave.

We rested there for a few minutes and revelled in the glorious view which lay below us, and more

than made up for all we had had to go through; but we had still more perils to encounter. We had come to visit the upper caves, and so far were only at the entrance, and all we could see before us was a very steep slope into a pitch-dark chasm.

A Malay boy went before us with a lamp which seemed to have very little power against the dense blackness through which we groped our way, never knowing from minute to minute what abysses were yawning on every side of us. We seemed to be in an enormous cave with smaller caves leading off it on both sides and pitfalls in every direction.

One cavern was said to be the burial ground of a very powerful Rajah, and the natives had never attempted to examine it for fear of ghosts.

We passed by one specially large crater which went sheer down into aching darkness; a stumble, and this world would have been rid of us. But Providence was evidently very near us, and though we seemed to be descending into the bowels of the earth down a slippery as well as a dark and steep way, we found ourselves after a few minutes safely at the bottom, and after a short ascent we came into a magnificent dome, pierced from above by a most welcome shaft of real daylight, which showed up to perfection the wonderful beauty of the huge

cave just as it had been left by the sea such ages ago. It was certainly one of the grandest sights we had ever seen, so vast and so perfectly proportioned, and nothing had been forgotten. Stalactites, marvellous in tracery and design, decorated the roof and made beautiful gardens for the thousands, the tens of thousands, of swallows who made their nests in every nook and crevice.

These are the nests which, when collected at the proper time and in good condition, look like white gelatine, and are very valuable for soup. Chinese gourmets will give almost anything for them, but when they are mixed with feathers and other refuse they are not worth nearly so much. The birds make them entirely from their own salivary secretion, and it is more than wonderful how the natives collect them.

At least three hundred feet above us we saw frail bamboo staging dotted about here and there, and from many parts of the roof pliable bamboo ladders were hanging from firmly fixed pegs of wood. How the first ones got up there the natives didn't seem able to explain, but the present ones are hammered in, in the most hideously dangerous and impossible way for anyone, except those who have been trained to it, as the Budulupes, from their babyhood.

A man climbs up one of these swinging ladders carrying with him a very long rattan, and when he has marked out any place specially rich in nests, he fixes this rattan by a peg into the limestone roof close to the ladder, and then, trusting his entire weight to that one peg, he swings off into space in the direction of any nests he particularly wants. Higher and higher he swings himself, till he comes within reach of any projection or crevice in the limestone roof, and then, holding tight to it, he takes another peg and hammers in another rattan, so making another centre from which to swing.

Think of the danger! Three hundred feet above the ground, a man lying on the air hanging on to a little projection of rock, and at the same time hammering in a peg on the strength of which his and the other collectors' lives are to depend, and his own life at the moment, and his only way back to safety entirely dependent on a rattan which he holds between his feet! And yet he smokes happily while he is hovering between life and death as if it were nothing.

They are careful to renew yearly all their ropes and ladders, and they have, I believe, very few accidents, though if you had ever seen what we did you would find this difficult to believe.

Our journey back was uneventful, and though we found rhinoceroses as well as elephants had been quite lately along our path leading to the river, we again saw nothing, which was disappointing ; but our canoes were waiting for us, and our launch met us again further down, and we arrived in due time at Sandakan very tired but very pleased with ourselves.

CHAPTER V

ON A DESERT ISLAND

ONE of our most favourite haunts was Taganak, a lovely uninhabited island about twenty-two miles from Sandakan, and when we had two or three days to spare, we borrowed a steam launch or little sailing yacht and off we went.

With a good breeze it only took us a few hours to sail there, and when it was calm I enjoyed it; but it was a dangerous place for sudden storms, and when one of these caught us and the sea rose higher and higher and we had to let go all sail and rush before it, I would have given more than a little to find myself on dry land again.

The sails bounded away in front of us, or lay sideways on the water whilst we cut at a terrific rate through the blinding foam. It was certainly bracing; every nerve was strung up, and if I were a proper sailor I should of course have loved it. But I am not, so I hated it. My first really happy moment was when we arrived in safety again,

drenched from head to foot, but hardly conscious of it in the joy of being alive.

Taganak has only one really good landing-place, as a barrier coral reef runs round the greater part of the island. I wish I could describe coral as I first saw it. Before I went to Taganak there was no romance to me in coral. I only thought it existed in two colours—pink and red—and I practically only knew it in the form of beads. But one very bright and lovely day I was floating lazily about in a small boat close to the shore, when I looked over the side and saw, through several fathoms of water of such transparency that it heightened instead of taking from the effect of what lay below, a fairyland of beauty—graceful trees and lovely gardens in every design and colour, all blended together in perfect harmony. The exquisite finish and delicacy of every tendril is impossible to describe, but I don't think I have ever seen anything so beautiful before or since. The brilliant blue little fishes, darting about playing hide-and-seek in and out of all the covered ways in this wonderful playground, and for whose sake all this wealth of beauty seems to have been made, certainly lead an enviable life.

As the island was uninhabited we were able to wander about dressed in as airy costumes as we

liked, which in the tropics is a great boon. In the daytime we had a shady open jungle which came down almost to the water's edge, and was full of interesting trees and flowers, as well as butterflies, pigeons, and jungle fowl. Then at night we sat by the water and watched the brilliant phosphorescence in front of us, which alternately changed from the most vivid emerald green to a sea of silver. So charged was the sea with this wonderful light, that on a dark night if you put your hand in the water it would flash with bright diamonds after you pulled it out again. We slept in our usual little huts, roofed with palm leaves, just inside the jungle, which our boys put up in a few minutes for us.

There's an extraordinary fascination in sleeping out of doors, particularly on a desert island. It gives you such a wonderfully free, uncooped feeling; and sometimes when the moon was at its full, and lit up the sea at one side of you and the jungle on the other, the calm quiet beauty of it all filled your whole being.

Our staple food was turtles' eggs, and in the morning, if we were up early enough, we could see the turtles waddling off to the sea again after laying their eggs. They are extraordinarily strong. One day I got on to the back of one, and it walked

on just as if it didn't know I was there. They will never walk over sand where man has trodden, unless all taint has gone by the tide washing out his footsteps; but if you are careful not to intrude, they come up out of the water, dig holes about a yard deep, lay their eggs—about one hundred to a hundred and thirty at a time—and then carefully replace the sand. The eggs are round, about the size of a billiard-ball, with soft tough skins, and all together they make a more or less elastic mass. The natives seem to know by the faintest touch that they are there.

They take a thin rod which they keep on running into the sand, and in this way they soon find the nests even if the tide has been over them and left no tracks. I tried to learn, and ran a great risk of smashing up all the eggs, long before I could make up my mind whether there were any or not. The white is too opaque to use, but the yolk makes very good omelets, and can also be eaten hard-boiled.

Our life at Taganak was generally very peaceful, with no fear of outside interruption, so I was much astonished when our boy appeared one day followed by three starving beings who turned out to be escaped slaves from an island hundreds of miles away. At first I couldn't make out what

was the matter. There were two women and a man, and the eldest woman knelt on the sands hugging my feet, and chattering to me in an absolutely unknown language; but fortunately among our boys there was one who understood her, and could translate what she said into Malay, and we found they had started days before in a cockleshell of a boat which they had made themselves in strict privacy, just a little dug-out canoe with a huge sail patched together of any scraps they could lay their hands on.

Most people would have laughed at the mere idea of trusting themselves on a shallow pond in anything so frail as the boat in which these three poor natives for several days and nights had lived on the open sea. They had been grossly illtreated by some brute of a Malay master, and at last they had made good their escape.

They entreated me to take them as my slaves for ever, and I was really sorry to have to refuse them, though what I should have done with them I can't imagine; but we fed them and comforted them as best we could, and then Dick sent them on to Sandakan with a note which would ensure their being well taken care of. It was dreadful having them lying at my feet. Natives have a way when they are talking to you of doubling themselves up as if they were in very bad pain, or pros-

trating themselves. The Dutch like it, and think it adds to their dignity; but in reality there cannot be anything much more undignified and degrading to one part of the human race than to have another part of it cowering in front of them.

Black races were, of course, never meant to be in the same position as white ones, any more than a kitchenmaid of a house, however excellent she may be, is made to be the equal of her mistress. They were meant to serve, not to rule; and it is entirely our faults when they fail in positions of authority in which we have placed them, for which and to which they were neither qualified nor born, but they wouldn't have been given legs unless they were meant to stand on them. The Dutch are inclined to look upon them as not merely a lower race than themselves, but lower than their animals, and we had occasionally most brutal cases of cruelty on the estates which Dick and the other magistrates had to inquire into. It was most uncomfortable sometimes to get out of lunching with the very man they were going to try, and, however fiendish the managers had been, they always expected and considered it their right to escape with only a fine. Dick got into great trouble once for giving a fine with the option of imprisonment. The mention of the word

imprisonment was supposed to be most derogatory and offensive. Dick was wrong certainly, but not in the way they meant. The manager was a blackguard, and it ought to have been imprisonment, with no option of a fine.

The only other adventure we had at Taganak might have had far more unpleasant results. We were bathing very far out, as where the coral reefs stopped there was a long shallow reach of smooth sand which seemed a perfect place for a swim, as we knew there were no large rivers with crocodiles anywhere near; but we had never thought of sharks, and we were quietly playing about in the water when suddenly a huge monster appeared within two yards of us.

I don't quite know what we felt, it was all so quick and so horrible, but we yelled and splashed as violently as we could, and that so astonished the brute that he at once fled, and so did we. Bathing had lost all its charm, and the stretch of water between us and safety seemed never-ending; but it was over at last, and never was dry land more welcome. We found afterwards that the place was so infested with sharks that, though there was a rich harvest of pearl shells to be gathered there, the divers when they arrived could do no work.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE HEAD-HUNTING COUNTRY

THE most interesting part of our life in Borneo was spent right up in the interior, in the head-hunting country, an unknown part of the world even to those who have lived in Sandakan for years, which is not surprising, as the journey up there from Sandakan takes as long as it does to get from Liverpool to Cape Town, and had to be made entirely by water, as there were no roads of any kind.

I had pressing invitations to live with some of our friends while Dick was away, but, in spite of everyone's kindness, we started together early one morning across the bay, making for the Kinabatangan, the largest river in Borneo.

A head tobacco manager, living in Sandakan, very kindly took us with him the first day, and then sent us on in his launch as far as the river was navigable, which was for about one more day, and then we had to take to the ordinary native dug-out boats.

The first two nights we were most hospitably housed by tobacco-planters, who put us up at their bungalows, and did all they could for our comfort and entertainment, which included a wonderful sword dance by moonlight, given by a large number of Sikhs from one of the estates. Better tobacco leaf for the covering of cigars is grown on these estates than in any other part of the world.

Another night a Dutch manager kindly gave a dinner-party in our honour, and as French hours were the rule, and we had had nothing but coffee since our eleven o'clock *déjeuner*, we arrived at his house simply famishing at about 6.30, expecting to have dinner at once. Drinks of every kind were handed round incessantly one after another, including gin and port, and 7.30 came, and 8.30 came, and still no prospect of food; but at last, to our intense relief, we saw signs of life in the dining-room, which led out of the verandah, where we were all sitting, and in time we got some dinner.

The anxieties of the evening were not over, however, as afterwards our host insisted on our having a dance, and before we could stop him everything was cleared away and prepared. It was too awful, as we all knew, though we weren't supposed to,

and so could say nothing, that he had very bad heart disease, and might at any moment fall down dead. The doctor had ordered him never to touch wine, and never to take the slightest extra exertion, and anything more absolutely against all orders than the way we were spending the evening I have seldom seen. A very charming German lady who was there was as miserable as I was, and we could only pray that he wouldn't die while we were actually dancing with him, and leave as early as we possibly could without giving offence.

The first fifty or sixty miles of the Kinabatangan is very dull. The sides are lined with nothing but mangrove and nipas palm swamps. The first sign of human habitation is the deserted, low-lying Melapi estate, suitable for sago planting and sugar-cane. The sago palms love low, swampy districts, and when they are eight or ten years old they are cut down and split up, and the pith hollowed out with bamboo scoops, and then that is washed and dried in the sun again and again, till it becomes the sago we know in soups and puddings.

The next estate, Bilit, is a great contrast to Melapi—a beautifully kept plantation, with a lovely bungalow, covered with creepers, very picturesquely situated on the side of a hill overlooking

the river; then at varying intervals come about three more estates, and the tobacco region is passed.

The native houses are very few and far between, but sometimes we came upon most welcome clumps of fruit trees, marking out where there had formerly been a village, and langsats, durians, lichee, pumeloes, limes, and other refreshing fruits made a most welcome addition to our diet, which consisted for the most part of corned beef, sardines, eggs, chickens, and rice. The estates are worked generally with Chinese labour. The Chinese are a most industrious, law-abiding people if only they are governed properly, and as labourers they are unequalled for work requiring physical strength and intelligence, as they can stand climates which would kill Europeans, and they produce wonderful results with whatever they take in hand. Their work, whether mining, trading, or gardening, is first rate, and they certainly deserve to succeed, as they are very temperate in their habits, and they spare themselves no trouble and go in for no luxuries except opium, which, in the majority of cases, has a distinctly beneficial effect on them, opium smokers being among the most orderly and the best-conducted members of the Chinese community.

The amount of nonsense which is talked sometimes by those who know nothing about the question of the employment of Chinese labour is too ludicrous. One thing only can be said, and that is that, once tried in those parts of the world where white labour is impracticable, they will make themselves, in an unobtrusive, quiet way, so indispensable to the development of whatever work they have in hand that no employers of labour will ever wish to be rid of them.

They are a strange, interesting people, deeply conservative, and deadly enemies to all progress and Western innovations.

Their minds are cast in such an absolutely different mould from ours, that it is difficult for us to understand one another. Perhaps one of their most striking traits is their utter indifference to death. Among the thousands of coolies who come down to Borneo there is naturally some scum, and on one of the estates Dick had a murder case to try. Four men were accused of murdering their superintendent. They owned up at once and gave all the details themselves, not attempting to excuse it in any way, and two other coolies insisted on being in it too. Dick explained to them that there was nothing against them, and that it was a hanging matter, but that apparently

made them all the keener to join in. They have absolutely no fear of death so long as all their limbs are together, but they can't stand the idea of the other world minus a finger or toe, and if they have had to lose either one or the other in hospital they ask leave to have it preserved so that they can take it back to China and have it buried with them.

They are also very strong fatalists. If you fall into the water they will never put out a hand to help you, as they take your fall as a sign that the god of the waters is determined to have a life, and they think if it isn't yours he gets it will be theirs. I only know of one case where a Chinaman saved a man from drowning, and that was an extraordinary exception to their rule.

There was once a very flourishing trade between Borneo and China, but the trade fell off when the Portuguese and Spanish and Dutch appeared on the scene, as they destroyed all produce they could not use themselves, and the Malays have never really recovered from the treatment they received at their hands. The natives are expert at boating, cutting down trees, building rough houses, and making palm-leaf roofing and mats, but though many of them have Chinese blood in their veins, they show none of the Chinese charac-

teristics. They are as lazy as the Chinese are hardworking.

Going up the first part of the river we had to do entirely with Dusun tribes, and we found them very gentle and courteous, and their long palm-leaf houses surrounded by gardens and nestling in trees on the river banks were very picturesque. They have not many wants, and the only real work they do in the year is cutting down trees and clearing the land for their rice, or padi crops, as they are always called.

They grow maize, tapioca-root, sugar-cane, bananas, and sweet potatoes round their houses with a minimum of work, but their only ambition is to provide enough of everything for their daily consumption, and with that they are more than content.

The soil is wonderfully fertile, from the highest hills which produce splendid crops of padi, to the lowest-lying swamps, where you get equally good crops of sago; the whole country, owing to its temperature and rainfall, is really suited for all kinds of tropical products, and there is hardly an inch of land which, with a little trouble spent over it, would not yield good results; but they are happier taking life easily, and if they spend an hour or two in the day looking for jungle produce they feel they have done well.

This, to our unsatisfied, restless, craving minds is maddening, and we long to upset their peaceful lives by planting in them a longing for the root of all evil, for the very unselfish reason that it would eventually mean gain for us.

They are perfectly happy without money; no one is rich, no one poor; and money, or the want of it, has made such a hopeless mess of many of our lives, that it seems a pity we should try to introduce the same disturbing element into theirs. They are lazy certainly; but compare that vice with those which go hand in hand with the love of gain. Envy, covetousness, and lust are unknown to them. Their only great vice is a passion for shedding blood, which in a lesser degree is as fully developed in them as in the head-hunting Murut and Dyak tribes. To satisfy this craving, "blood feuds" have been handed down from generation to generation between the different tribes dotted about all over the country. No man ever fights against his own people, but he wins fame for himself and for his whole tribe by making war on anyone with whom he has the satisfaction of having a blood feud. When we were staying among them, we saw nothing but the peaceful side of their characters. They have settled down wonderfully quietly under British rule, and they give very little trouble.

They had a tremendous respect for Dick, caused partly, I expect, by his great height. Their average size was about four feet, and his six feet three inches impressed them deeply, and his very grave manner suited them, as they cannot bear to feel they are not being taken seriously; they are most sensitive to any idea of ridicule, a trait in their characters which is not sufficiently grasped by those over them.

The only way Dick could really get at things he wanted to know was to ask any natives who had special information to come and see him, and then to sit quietly and let them ramble on at their will with very long stories nothing to do with the point. It is difficult when you are in a great hurry to look as if time were no object; but it is the only safe and sure way to get at anything when you are dealing with coloured races. They cannot go straight to the point, and if you try to make them, the only result is hopeless confusion in their mind and yours. It is like trying to help anyone who stammers badly; they start each time from the beginning again.

There is a great deal of Mahometanism among these river tribes till you get right up into the interior, and those who profess it are, like all Mahometans, most careful about their religious

observances. A chief while we were with him would suddenly start bowing and kneeling and prostrating himself, and at the same time gabble off weird prayers, which often sounds to an outsider like a constant repetition of the words, "La illa ill ullah la." I tried to find out from one of our orderlies, a devout Mahometan, what it meant, but he did not know, and I do not think he specially wanted to.

In Africa we used to be waked up by boys spelling out and chanting verses of the Koran by the glow of a stick fire, round which they were all huddled, but they understand little or nothing of what they are doing, which suits them admirably. Mahometanism, though, as an abstract faith, has a wonderfully strong hold on them, and they save up year after year to be able to journey to Mecca before they die. Their religion allows them four wives, but very few avail themselves of this priceless privilege. They most of them find one quite as much as they can manage!

Every morning, when we came to a convenient place to land, we used to get out and have our food and stretch our legs while the men cooked their rice. The people were very nice to us, bringing us fruit and welcoming us sometimes with the most perfect courtesy, but generally they

found me such a wonderful sight they could do little but stare. Every man, woman, and child would stand and gaze as if their minds were incapable of taking in such a phenomenon. I used to chatter to them, and though they could not understand a word, they made a most enthusiastic audience, as they laughed when I laughed, and followed every word and movement, and were certainly very easy to entertain, as the fact of my being able to use my hands and cross my legs and open and shut my eyes interested them enormously, and was pointed out to those who might have missed it as something really worthy of note. They were delighted when we stayed with them; several families shared the same house, each of them having a small square of floor, which was their own special private property. In the daytime there was nothing to show where one square ended and the other began, but at night some of them enclosed their little space entirely with heavy curtains, and the amount of microbes and carbonic acid gas they must have inhaled is too awful to think of.

Dick had various cases to try on our way up into the interior, but most of them of a very mild type. A man would come determined to divorce his wife, and Dick was obliged to give a permit

if he insisted, but I have never known anyone go away with one yet. First the man would come, then the woman, bringing up the most childish trivialities against each other, and it was evidently quite impossible for them ever to get on again. Dick would talk to them gravely, and tell them to come back again in twenty-four hours with their final decision, and they were then in ludicrously different moods, delighted with each other and all the world, and evidently meaning to live happily ever afterwards. They are just like children, but unfortunately their quarrels may lead to more serious results.

One day a native corporal brought up two privates with a great grievance against a man whom they had arrested for insult. "What did he do?" "He fell over a step going into a house, hurting a man inside!" "Did he do it on purpose?" "Oh no, but it was an insult, as he hurt the man badly!" "But it was an accident!" "Yes." "Then it was not an insult!" "Yes it was, because he didn't say he was sorry." The sting was out, the offender was then made to apologise, and they all walked off happily together. Refined niceties of that kind are not what you expect to find among partial or wholly savage races, but the people's unquestioning

confidence in the justice of an Englishman is very touching, and those who are unprincipled enough to act in such a way as to wreck that trust have a great deal to answer for. They wreck at the same time their reverence for all that is above them, including their conception, however dim, of God.

It is a great pity that men and even boys, totally ignorant of native life and customs, are sent to rule, or rather to experiment on them, for it is nothing else but learning by blunder after blunder—a bitter experience to the native, if not to them—the things which belong to the peace of the country they have been sent to govern. Cases of this kind are constant, and might so easily be avoided. No one at home would dream of turning into their schoolrooms governesses who had not only never seen children, but had had no training in the art of teaching; and yet that is what we are doing constantly in out-of-the-way parts of the world, because at the moment there is no one with any experience to send. Inexperience does such incalculable harm that one can't help feeling how far better it would be to leave the natives alone till the necessary experience has been gained, even if it should risk an intertribal war.

Every country, whether white or black, has some manners and customs peculiar to itself, but we English refuse to recognise this well-known fact. We pride ourselves on standing first among the nations of the world, and instead of being particularly careful for that very reason to show our superiority by special courtesy, we force our insularism where it is not wanted, and ride rough-shod over any ways which may not agree with ours. This characteristic often makes us intolerably offensive to other Europeans, and to coloured races ungenerous and cruel; but even with the best intentions in the world it is impossible not to offend unless we first learn by our own experience, or in a happier and less painful way still, by other people's, something of the history and nature of the people with whom we have to deal.

The other cases Dick had to see about were generally to do with slaves or men marrying without having paid their dowry, and then conveniently forgetting all about it.

By the marriage laws, the dowry required by the parents before they part with their daughters is so enormous that the women are often getting on in years before the men can afford to marry them, and so the population does not increase in the way it otherwise would.

As many as one hundred and fifty different things—cattle, gongs, jars, and sarongs—may be demanded, which means many years of work.

A Dusun wedding is rather a quaint sight. If the girl lives in a different village from the man, the paths between the two villages are brushed very clean for the occasion ; then all we see and hear is a great deal of dancing and singing, and after the dancing the bridal procession walks solemnly in single file before the audience. First four bridesmaids, then the bride with her face covered, and after her the bridegroom.

The festivities are then kept up till the morning, when the bride goes home with her husband. The next day it is etiquette for her to run back to her father's house, and when a lot of women come from her husband's village to fetch her back, she would be considered bold and forward if she didn't pretend not to want to go, but she eventually lets herself be persuaded, and this little play has to be repeated several times before she is allowed to settle down as a married woman.

The one thing which thrilled the people more than anything else was medicine in every shape and form ; it was useful as a reward, if any of our boys had been doing particularly well, but there was sometimes a great deal of feeling over it.

Two men would come and say they felt very ill, but if we gave pills to them the two would increase in no time to two dozen, and no amount of nastiness would choke them off. A pill was the goal at which they were all aiming, but short of that, anything was better than nothing.

We knew very little, but they knew less, and their own ideas of medicine were so crude and dreadful that we could often do good. Their one rule for all kinds of wounds was to fill them with sawdust, or, failing that, any other kind of dust was supposed to be better than cleanliness, and they were more than astonished when we washed the places with disinfectants; but they never dreamed of doubting us, and they always followed our directions to the letter. A small boy was given to me once to be my slave for ever by its father, a chief in one of the villages we were passing through.

We heard a child constantly moaning as if it was in great pain, and we found a very sweet little two-year-old boy who had trodden on the fire and burnt his foot terribly. It was in an awful state, as it was clotted with dust and dirt, and I never had a worse half hour than washing and dressing it, the child shrieking with agony, poor little scrap, and the people pressing round on every side to see what I was doing.

Its mother held it, and her quiet confidence in me, though she couldn't understand a word I said, and I was torturing her child, was very touching. At last, however, it was done, and in a few days I heard to my great relief that it was practically well. The chief was overwhelming in his gratitude, and didn't like my smiling when he presented me with his fat little baby son as my slave!

Sometimes their faith in our medical powers became a little awkward, and a man with paralysis, or a woman with one leg shorter than the other, took our inability to attempt to cure them as a sign of unfriendliness, and it was very difficult to make them understand the difference between "won't" and "can't." A white man's "can't" was an unknown quantity to them. A very old Rajah came and sat down at the entrance of our cubicle one day with an extreme old-age cough which he kept going for our benefit. He insisted on having medicine, and he was too old to play with, and we couldn't bring back youth; but we were almost ready to attempt that at last in our anxiety to get rid of him. There he sat, making every kind of disgusting noise and absolutely refusing to move; so at last, in sheer desperation, we made him up a prescription, and he went happily away. We mixed fruit syrup and water together, and then

flavoured it with whisky, and told him to take a small sip whenever the cough was specially troublesome. He found it extraordinarily comforting, and when we next passed down the river he was very keen for more.

All the tribes have another characteristic in common—they are most superstitious.

The Dusuns, if they find a dead mouse on their path shortly after starting any expedition, take it as a bad omen, and wish to give the whole thing up. The Muruts feel the same about deer going down their path in front of them, across a padi field, and washing a mosquito curtain in the river is supposed to turn crocodiles wild with rage. This superstition was unfortunately much strengthened one day as a woman was washing a curtain in a brackish stream outside her house up which no crocodile could possibly have come, but apparently instinct told them what was going on, and her husband, when getting out of a boat down by the river the same evening, was seized, and would never have been heard of again if there hadn't been several people near with sticks and spears to come to the rescue.

I expect the poor wife bitterly rued the day on which she had so madly tempted the fates!

Then no Dyak will touch a dead bear, as if a

spot of its blood happens to touch them they believe they at once go mad.

On our way up the river we passed the haunted rock Temagong, outside which were tied various offerings, and our boatmen threw water to appease the spirits. They had water in such abundance all round them that I can't help thinking money, which was sometimes thrown, would have had a more pacifying effect. The rock is said to have shut down on two brothers who once went to visit it, and their imprisoned spirits have to be propitiated, as naturally they are not in the best of tempers at the extraordinary way they were treated when in the flesh.

At one place where we were staying, one of their strongest superstitions was to do with pigs. One of the Dyak's wives was very unhappy because she had never had a child, but one day when she was talking to me about it she suddenly said, "But it is all right now, my husband is going to buy a pig!" Pigs up there were very costly and enormously prized, as, unlike the river tribes who lived further down and the head-hunting tribes who lived further up the river, these Dyaks never kept pigs, and every one they had was imported with a great deal of cost and trouble; but what that had to do with having a child I couldn't

imagine. The woman had perfect faith, though, that her husband, having once promised to get one, all would be well. She pointed to another house on a hill near, and explained to me that the Dyak living there had never had a child till he got a pig, but when that arrived and had been killed among much feasting and dancing, and part of it made into a lotion with water, and the rest cooked and eaten, a child soon arrived. I thought at first I couldn't have understood properly, as we were talking an extraordinary jargon of Malay languages; but I had, and I only hope that the pig arrived in due time, and that her faith was not in vain.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE KINABATANGAN

THE dug-out native boat we used, after leaving the estates and all ordinary civilisation behind us, was large enough to take us all—Dyak police, boys, and boatmen, and we had a palm-leaf roof over our end of it to protect us from the sun and rain; but we were very careful how we got in and out, as it had a nasty way of upsetting half over, which, in a river full of crocodiles thirsting for your blood, was not a particularly pleasant prospect.

In some rivers the tribes trap and eat them, and then they are few and far between. They have two or three ways of catching them. One way is by setting strong fishing-stake traps close to the shore, which the crocodiles stumble into at night when they swim along the edge of the land in quest of food, and then, once in there, where they haven't enough space to swing round and so bring their strength to bear, they are easily speared.

Another way of catching them is with a bait of some dead high animal, bound to a stake with numerous pieces of fishing-line seven or eight feet long tied all along it, which are brought together and made fast to the end of a rattan sixty to eighty feet long, the other end of which is tied to a float. The bait is then thrown into the river at night time, and the next crocodile passing that way falls an easy prey. He seizes it, swims off a little distance, and swallows it unsuspectingly. The natives then next morning search for the float and get firmly hold of the long rattan, and make for the shore with all speed, hoping to get to land, if possible, before the crocodile feels anything, as if not their boat might be upset. With a sudden jerk, they try to get the swallowed stake right across the crocodile's stomach, and then they begin to haul, and if the brute is a large one it needs a great deal of playing before being finally landed. It must give you a most powerless feeling to be dragged along by a rope fastened firmly to a stake inside you!

In the Kinabatangan, though, they are never touched, and they increase in number and size at an alarming rate. One day Dick lassoed the tail of a small one about fourteen and a half feet long, which was apparently asleep, but when it felt the

NATIVES BATHING IN THE RIVER

rope it started the most wonderful gymnastics, rearing and bounding with rage; but the natives held on splendidly while Dick rushed for his rifle, and fortunately he hit it in the eye so that the skin was not spoilt at all.

It was quite awful the number of natives that were taken; they were carried off day after day. But in spite of all their bitter experiences, they seemed incapable of taking the simplest precautions. A man's brother would be taken one night, his father the next, and yet on the third he would probably be found bathing again in the same place and at the same hour, just after the sun had gone down, when every crocodile is awake and looking out for its supper. A crocodile swimming up-stream with a man in its mouth was not an uncommon sight. I remember four out of six Chinese, just opposite to where we were, being taken one day all at once, which looked like a deliberate concerted attack on the part of the crocodiles. The only comfort is that it is a very quick death; it is really only the quickest form of drowning. They don't play with you like a cat; they just hold you under water till life is extinct, and then put you up some creek, where they have the self-control to leave you till you are in proper condition for their dinner.

There was great feasting one day in one of the villages as a crocodile had been killed, and in its inside the skull and other bones of the chief's brother-in-law, who had disappeared shortly before, had been found and brought home with much music and dancing. One of their dances consisted in moving round a pole, women in one direction and men in another; they moved quicker and quicker, till they all fell down in a giddy heap, a form of amusement which I should have thought would have palled after they were about six years old, but it evidently didn't.

Crocodiles have a nasty plan of hiding themselves just under the places where the natives get their water. One day a man just got away in time, but the brute swallowed his bucket. I have always wondered whether he found it in any way uncomfortable; an iron bucket *walking* about in your inside can't be very pleasant. Another day a brilliantly plucky thing was done by a young European planter. He was standing near the river when he saw a crocodile suddenly grab hold of a native's leg and pull him under the water. He rushed down and sprang in right on the top of them and seized hold of the man. A desperate struggle then went on, but he managed to save the man's life, as just as he was getting dreadfully

exhausted, the unfortunate leg came off, and the crocodile went off apparently satisfied. It was a splendid feat, worthy of any V.C., but if we hadn't been on the spot just then we should never even have heard of it.

In uncivilised, unknown regions of the world, like the interior of Borneo and the West African hinterland—both of which I can speak of from my own experience, having spent more than two years in Borneo and part of every year since 1900 in the African bush, where the chances of death are very numerous, and white men few and far between—they have constant opportunities of showing what they are made of, they themselves, without that restraining but often cramping force, public opinion, constant chances of proving themselves cowards or heroes, and those who come out best are those whom no one at home knows anything about.

There is a great deal of unwritten history in these out-of-the-way places, some of it very bad, as there are, of course, men who in times of danger are found hopelessly wanting. One case of cowardice reaped its own reward most speedily. Two men were living together right up in the interior, and when one of them was very ill they were attacked by some "unfriendlies." There was

no real danger, as they had a friendly force with them and plenty of ammunition; but the ill man got worse and worse, and the other, losing every bit of pluck and nerve he had ever possessed, determined at last not even to wait to see his friend die; so he collected all the food and ammunition and men he could (thirty of them refused to leave the dying man), and marched straight down to the coast, and reported the death of his friend at headquarters. The Governor wound up his affairs, and had his things taken over to send home, when in the dead man walked at the head of his thirty men, having quieted the "unfriendlies" without any difficulty before starting.

The next boat took one man away for ever. He was probably too constitutionally timid ever to have come out, but such cases are few and far between compared with those of pluck and bravery and devotion of which no one at home ever hears, but which are going on every day. I have met very nice people of almost every nationality, but every year I live I am more thankful to have been born an Englishwoman.

Travelling day after day in a dug-out boat is not the acme of comfort, but we could tie up at the side at night, and have a rough shed made to sleep in if we liked; and the "boys" always made

a rough bed about a yard from the ground, on which we put an old mattress, without which we never travelled, so that although our bed was not exactly a spring one, it didn't prevent our sleeping. We slept really as well out there, surrounded by every beast and reptile, as we do at home. Dangers, when you are in the midst of them, lose their terror in the most extraordinary way, and no one who has ever spent their nights in dense jungle right away from all the haunts of man can fail to be impressed.

The whirring song of millions of cicadas which suddenly breaks out from every tree at sunset, and which as suddenly stops, leaving a strange lull behind it; the cries of the different wild beasts out in search of their prey, and from time to time the blood-curdling shriek of their victims, showing that their quest has not been in vain, all blend together in that intense "noisy stillness" which once heard can never be forgotten.

That great black vastness full of life and death fills you with awe, but with wonder too that it should be possible to lie there in the midst of it quite safe, your only covering and protection a palm-leaf roof and a mosquito curtain; and even when one of those awful tropical thunderstorms came crashing down, deafening you with its roar

and tearing its way through the clouds like the report of thousands of Maxim guns all going off at once, and the lightning played over your head and ran along the ground blinding in its brilliance, flash after flash following one another with such rapidity as to make you only conscious of one continuous blaze of light, there you may be quite safe. And now and then you heard another sound, and involuntarily held your breath as some grand tree, a monarch of the jungle in all its beauty and strength, came thundering down—the work, the growth, the life of hundreds of years all over in a few seconds.

We only met one European after the tobacco estates, a great friend of ours who was camped out in the jungle surveying; and though we had only started a few days before, and had to get accustomed to doing without bread for a long time, we were already very tired of having none, and were delighted when Mr. Pavitt offered to show us how to make "most excellent Australian dampers." He said he could show us in a very few minutes, and he did. I will give the recipe in case anyone should like to try it. It was very simple, just flour and water and a little baking-powder in an open pan over the fire. I felt just a little sceptical—baking-powder and an open pan; but Mr. Pavitt

was quite confident of the result, which was, as no cook will be surprised to hear, lumps of uneatable lead! We were very grateful, and did our best to eat some of it, only after dinner, when we left him to go on with our journey up the river, there was almost too much unselfishness to be quite genuine, shown on both sides, as to how much we should carry on with us, and how much leave in the camp!

We hadn't much shooting, but we were able to get a few jungle fowl and pigeons, and now and then a little venison, which were very welcome additions to our food. We passed perfect places for deer, lovely grassy banks which looked most inviting, but we had no time to stay anywhere long. We always made a point of getting fruit from one or other of the villages we passed; bananas and papyas we could get practically everywhere. Rice had to take the place of bread, and the sight of a plate of rice in the early morning, when you first woke up, if you were feeling rather seedy, was enough to cure anyone of it for ever. My bath I had generally in the jungle just before dark, but bathing in the tropics out of doors is often attended by slight drawbacks. I sometimes found afterwards enormous leeches like big black slugs sticking to me all swollen with my blood.

One night we came to a lovely sandy river which looked very inviting, and as the people told us no crocodiles ever came up there, in we dived, just at sunset, the very worst time if any of those creatures are about. The people had made just a little mistake which might have cost us our lives, as the brutes were there; but happily for us they hadn't been particularly hungry, and we were safe on shore before we knew the danger we had run. A very special Providence was certainly watching over us. We often slept in our boat in order to save time. The river never looked more beautiful than on the nights when the moon rose behind the jungle trees, and shining through the soft mist which was hanging over the water, turned it into a rippling silver sea, and the beauty and picturesqueness of it all was not lessened by log fires on the bank, round which we could see the dusky forms of our men as they slept or cooked their evening meal. The river on an evening like that looked very different from when it was in flood, the one phase of its existence all peace and beauty, the other all turbulence and rage.

In thirty minutes it would rise six to ten feet, I wonder whether anyone who hasn't seen it can realise what that means. The rain may only be going on miles away, but suddenly the water

begins to swell, and the little tributaries turn from sluggish streams into roaring rivers, and the river itself into a surging torrent, which rolls down towards the sea with an overwhelming relentless force, carrying everything before it. Huge jungle trees are swept off the bank and flash past you one after another in their desperate race for the ocean, and every few minutes of rain increases the mad swirl of the flood as it goes thundering along, sucking down everything into its seething, foaming waters.

We once in an unwise moment, when we were in a great hurry to get on, tried to work our way against a slight flood. It was horrible, and just like a nightmare, as with everyone working their hardest we made no single step forward, and we were only too thankful to find ourselves back on land again, wiser if not sadder men.

There wasn't any room to turn in our canoe, but it was long enough, which was a comfort, and when we were well it was quite bearable; but once or twice I was very ill, and then I would have given all I possessed for a bed. The mosquitoes in one place we stayed were of a very virulent, poisonous type. They simply gave us no peace, and I unfortunately tried to combine curing a wild cat's skin, and scratching my bites. The result was bad blood poisoning.

Dick did everything he could to make things bearable for me, but we were stranded with no doctor within weeks of us.

We made for Penungah, the furthest Government station, where Dick knew there was a properly built little wooden bungalow. It was only two days away, but those two days seemed interminable. I thought they would never be over. I was very ill, and getting worse and worse, and neither travelling in a small canoe by water nor on foot by land improved matters. I shall never forget the relief of actually getting to Penungah and being carried up to comparative coolness and quiet, with room to move and groan as I liked.

I was a poisonous sight, and I felt even worse than I looked—which is saying a great deal!

I was ill for several weeks, but anything seemed bearable after those first few days of incessant movement. The only medicine I had was a little lime given me by the natives to bathe with. They made it out of shells from the river-bed, and they always used it themselves to chew with betel nut. Dick was able to be with me at night, and in the daytime a Chinaman and a Malay boy divided the honour of taking care of me.

We got very few mails, but I remember waking up the Christmas Day we were up there to find

several weeks' mails on a chair just outside my mosquito curtain. It gave me the most Christmassy feeling I have ever had. The only other thing that same day which sticks in my mind is Dick making mince-pies for a surprise for me.

To begin with, I have never cared for them, and they are just the very food you would avoid for an invalid, and there were such unsurmountable difficulties in the way of pastry making; but these objections only fired Dick the more, and after a great many preparations and a great deal of yelling at the "boys" he got fairly started with a tin of mince-meat, another of butter, and some flour, and for rolling-pin and board a round tin and a box.

I, of course, heard nothing; only a few thin planks about seven feet high and open at the top divided us, and never was there such good will and such energy put into pastry—of that I am certain.

The noise was deafening, as the pastry evidently wouldn't roll, and Dick, determined not to be outdone, started to hammer it out, and I won't say where I wished every mince-pie which had ever been made long before these resounding bangs stopped, as I wouldn't hurt Dick's feelings for worlds. I couldn't help almost sobbing with

laughter in spite of the pain. At last it was over though, and quiet reigned again till dinner time, when in came Dick's Christmas present to me, the most extraordinary shaped little pies you have ever seen, rather like screwed-up bags. They had been cooked in a saucepan, and anyone can guess what they were like to eat; but the strangest part of it all is they would guess quite wrong. Nothing could have been crisper or lighter, proving for ever the fallacy that a light hand is necessary if pastry is to be a success. After what I had heard they certainly were a more wonderful surprise to me than Dick had even meant them to be, and he was delighted.

He had done his best to get me a turkey too, but had failed. He occasionally brought in game, but the shyness of the pheasants (many of them beautiful fire-backs) and the closeness of the jungle round Penungah made shooting difficult. Our men sometimes trapped animals for us; they brought in several wild cats; one poor thing, in its rage at being caught, bit its paw off in order to free itself, but in its fury it got muddled, and bit it off below the string which held it instead of above.

CHAPTER VIII

WE GIVE A BALL

WHEN I was well enough, which wasn't for some time, as I got about too soon and made myself ill again, we gave a large dance to all the country round. The preparations for it were very simple, as, except pengasi—a strong native spirit made from rice, with a few other little ingredients thrown in, which one of the Dyak's wives made for us a fortnight before—we had nothing to get ready but bananas, rice, sweet potatoes, and plenty of coarse tobacco.

The day came, and our guests were invited at 9 p.m., but before three o'clock in the afternoon canoes began to arrive from all parts, and the people came swarming up the hill and into the room where I was resting exactly six hours before we expected or wanted them, but Dick, with the aid of a kodak, in which they were very much interested, soon got rid of them. They are very inquisitive, so when they saw him with something

they didn't understand they all trooped out to look, and Dick at once led them right down the hill again, where he explained to the Dyaks we shouldn't be ready for them till nine o'clock.

We were then left in peace till we sent down to say we were ready for them. Our dressing didn't take us long, as I wore a white dressing-gown and Dick something equally ball-like. Our guests came rushing in one after another; none of them saying "How d'you do"; they just squatted down all round us, all of them, contrary to their usual custom, more or less clothed. Some of them wore the most wonderfully elaborate sarongs worked in gold, and many of them would have been very good looking, only bright crimson teeth and mouths are disfiguring to anyone, and they had ruined their otherwise beautiful ivory teeth with betel-nut juice. They chew betel-nut and lime from morning till night. They offered me some, which I of course accepted, and we chewed solemnly opposite each other till I found a convenient moment for throwing mine away without hurting their feelings. I think the sight of a white woman formed an epoch in their lives from which everything before and after would date. I felt a cross between royalty and the latest addition at the Zoo. The excitement was intense, as

their wildest imaginations had evidently never pictured anything quite so extraordinary. They simply drank me in. At last, to vary the monotony, we told one of our Dyak police they might dance, but they didn't seem in the least interested when he explained to them what we had said; they neither moved nor spoke, and for a long time their eyes were literally glued to me. We were glad when they begged us to come and start the pengasi drinking, as the Dyaks explained to us they could never dance till they felt a little merry, and judging by their faces merriment was very far off just then! The pengasi was standing in a huge stone jar, and I was given a large bamboo to draw it up with. It was very good, and the more you drink the grander you are supposed to be, and I was anxious to impress my large audience; but it was very strong, so I tried to take them in by keeping my mouth fixed to the bamboo and swallowing from time to time without really taking anything. I found afterwards I had deceived no one, which was most disappointing.

They had been watching for the spirit to sink, and I, of course, had never dreamt of such a possibility. When the first Dyak started, however, I soon found how more than possible it was.

Where there was room for it all I don't know, and at last he evidently didn't know either. He stopped, and apologised to me for not being able to take any more. He spoke in Malay, but the literal translation was, "My head can still stand more, but my stomach can't." It was funny having to comfort anyone for anything quite so sad, but I tried to murmur something suitable to the occasion, and to assure him he had done quite splendidly, and I think he went away happier.

But still no dancing! Our part of the entertainment, doing nothing, was certainly not difficult, but it began to pall dreadfully, and we were wondering what on earth to do next to make things go, when a man, without uttering a sound, suddenly got up and began pacing slowly round in a circle; then another followed him, and another, till there were I don't know how many men following each other in grave silence, all looking more solemn than the one in front of them.

Then the women joined in, one at a time, too, but the moment the first woman arrived they turned round, and starting a weird chant, took arms in a ring—a ring they never broke, except to let a single person in or out, till six the next morning. Their dance was a kind of see-saw

goose step backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, and those looking on, as well as the dancers themselves, accompanied the monotonous swing of their bodies with a long-drawn-out, wailing funeral dirge, broken occasionally by a flourishing recitative from some woman; but the men never varied their drone the whole night through, and their wide-open mouths and tragical faces looked much more like enforced hard labour, or a funeral, than any form of amusement. Dick and I joined them for a few minutes, which pleased them enormously; but the sight of Dick, intensely solemn, swinging backwards and forwards in the middle of those little men who were trying their best to hold on to his arms, when their heads only came just above his elbows, was very funny.

After a few hours we were so wearied, and our guests seemed so wholly satisfied, that we made the Dyaks responsible, and went to bed. I can't say we slept much, and when we went back at about 5 a.m. the same dance and the same droning was still going on, but I never saw such a wreck of a feast. Many of them by that time were so overcome with weariness, and perhaps a little more drink than was good for them, that being linked together was really the only thing that kept them going.

Between 6 and 6.30 they broke up, and went off helter-skelter, only three or four of the whole company thinking it necessary to say good-bye. I believe they had enjoyed themselves enormously, and that they look upon that night as the one in their lifetime from which everything dates. It seems almost impossible it should be so, for though natives hide all emotion, they were almost too successful in the way they hid any sign of pleasure that night. But we were delighted to hear it was such a success.

Some of the women came up from time to time to have a talk with me, and my not being able to understand didn't seem to spoil their enjoyment in the least. Any third person looking on would have thought we were having a most brilliant conversation. I think the natives must have thought that I could understand everything, only that I had a muddling way of explaining myself. Anyway, we made great friends over it, and it was quite impossible for us ever to hurt each other's feelings, which was a comfort.

CHAPTER IX

A MURDER CASE

AFTER the ball our life passed fairly smoothly, till one day the news was brought to us of a murder up in the head-hunting country two or three days further up in the interior than Penungah.

Two Sulu traders had been found speared in the back, evidently when they were asleep, and the head of one was missing, which looked like head-hunters, but if so, why hadn't they taken both heads?

We started at once for the place, but part of the river was unnavigable, and the canoes we had to use were so small that Dick and I couldn't go together, so I went on in front in a little cockle-shell of a boat with two Dyak boatmen.

It was grand scenery; each bend in the river brought a new vision of beauty. Luxuriant creepers of every kind falling with their own special grace from trees a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet in

height, right down to the water's edge, with here and there great waterfalls of crimson or purple flowers, a magnificent blaze of colour shown off to perfection by the beautiful green background. However, our time wasn't by any means all spent in admiring the view. We had rapids to get up, some of which were anything but easy, and in one place we suddenly swamped.

The Dyaks happily kept their heads, and, almost before I had realised what had happened, hauled me up on to a rock which was sticking out of the water near. We were all, of course, soaked through, but the men wore too little for that to make much difference. The whole thing seemed anyway to have a very cheering effect on them, and I wasn't sorry to be safe. Directly we had righted the boat, on we went again. The whole thing was over so quickly that Dick and his men had no idea we had capsized till we stopped, much later in the day, and by that time I was nearly dry again.

Our journey was quite fruitless, as when we got up to the scene of the murder we could find out absolutely nothing but what we already knew.

Dick did all he could, but we had no Sherlock Holmes with us, and we had to go back to Penungah again without having found the faintest clue to the murderers.

A few days afterwards, however, two of our Dyak police came in to say that the water, which had been very much swollen, had gone down, and that the spears of two men, who were known to have bought them the morning of the very day the murder took place, had been found in the river, close to where the murdered men had been discovered. Dick then found out that the owners of the spears had lately been staying in a little village not far down the river, and sent to have them arrested at once.

The police found them where they were supposed to be, and brought them straight back to Penungah that same night. The next morning they were brought up before Dick, as low a type of man as could be found anywhere. They certainly didn't look as if they were strangers to any cowardly crime, and when they were told what they were charged with they said nothing.

Dick had to arrange at once to go back into the head-hunting country for the trial, but that very day one of the prisoners escaped. His handcuffs had been taken off in order to make it possible for him to carry water from the river up to our house on the hill, the only form of work there was for them to do, and just when he and his guard had got up to the kitchen, which was not more

than twenty yards from the back of the house, we suddenly heard a loud shout and the report of a gun. Dick seized his revolver and flew, but only to find the man had already disappeared into the jungle. The sentry had evidently not been as near as he ought to have been, and had, we thought, only fired wildly into the air after his prisoner in order to give an audible proof that he was doing his duty. He, of course, swore that he was standing quite close, but the only witness, one of our boys who was cowering over the fire with a bad attack of malaria, gave a very different account.

Anyway, the prisoner had gone, and the greatest terror prevailed, as out in the Far East when a man sees that he is known to have committed one murder, he feels he can be in no worse plight, and so often goes amok, and rushes off in a frenzy like a madman, wounding and, if possible, killing everyone he meets.

Some people think this madness is real, but if so there is certainly a very wonderful method in it, as the natives always go amok when they have nothing more to lose, and start by killing those against whom they or their family have any grudge.

A very nice German lady we stayed with on one of the tobacco estates was nearly killed in this

way by one of their coolies. He crept in one morning when she was doing her hair, and she had just seen him in the glass and was turning round to send him away, when with one blow of his knife he cut off the lower part of her ear and smashed her jaw.

She saw him raise his arm and gave a scream, but knew nothing more. Her husband had just gone to have his bath, and the bath-rooms on the estates were quite separate from the house, but he fortunately heard her scream and rushed in just in time to give the alarm about the man and save his wife's life. He found her quite unconscious, and she was dangerously ill for a long time, but eventually she recovered.

The people at Penungah were therefore very much afraid that the escaped prisoner would go amok too, and they explained quickly to Dick that as that part of the jungle where we were was completely surrounded by rivers, and there were only three fords by which he could possibly escape, he was quite certain to make for one of them, and there was no time to be lost.

Four out of the six police were away, so Dick had to go himself to the one ford, leaving me sentry over the other prisoner, as the people down in the village were in such a state of panic that

they didn't dare to have him left anywhere near them. Dick hated leaving me, but there was nothing else to be done, and I didn't mind in the least.

I only hoped I shouldn't have to use my gun, as I didn't realise I should probably have killed him straight away. I only thought I should probably wound him badly, and then have to look after his wounds, which I was most anxious to avoid; I loaded it therefore very deliberately in front of him, so that he would see that although I was a woman, the cartridges were real, and that I knew how to use them; and then I sat down at a table a few yards from him to write my letters, but I didn't get on very fast, as I kept, of course, the tail of my eye always on him.

At first he was simply too astonished and creepy to move, but gradually he recovered and asked me in Malay who was guarding him? I looked very sternly at him and told him I was, which he didn't understand at all. But he soon began to talk again, and tried to induce me to let him go, but he gradually subsided into silence when he found I never answered. He next hoped to catch me napping, and began to attempt two or three times to get away, but directly I touched my gun and looked at him fixedly he was quiet, and Dick came

back to me as soon as he had made sure of his ford.

They couldn't find the escaped man, and panic spread up the river to such an extent that a whole village moved down to be near to us. The natives seem to feel that such a divinity surrounds a white man that to be within reach of even the rays of his halo protects them.

In the daytime I felt equal to any amount of murderers—I hadn't a qualm; but at night it certainly was rather dreadful to have to go to bed in an open house—there was no means of locking or even shutting up—with an escaped murderer roaming round, perhaps quite close.

A loaded revolver was certainly helpful, but it couldn't quite drown the dread of a madman with a spear suddenly leaping out of the darkness.

Dick always pretends not to know what nerves are, which on this occasion was comforting, and we certainly got through the night without any untoward adventure.

Next day we had to leave the poor terrified people who had come flocking down the river, and go back to the Murut country to the scene of the murder.

There are several tribes of these head-hunters, but we only stayed with two, the Romanows and

Tengaras, which resemble one another so closely that you can't describe one without describing the other. No one seems to know where they originally sprang from, but they are a much finer race than the ordinary Malay tribes, and quite a different type from the Dyaks; and putting aside their extraordinary predilection for heads, which certainly is a very unfortunate taste, and one that leads to very serious consequences, their lives seemed to us very well-ordered and peaceable.

This second time we managed to get up the rapids without being swamped, and we were evidently expected, as before we had quite reached our destination we caught sight of several naked forms who had evidently been on the look-out for us, rushing away through the trees to give notice to their different villages, and very soon after we had landed the chiefs came down to welcome us, and to guide us to their houses, which they build right back in the jungle, and not as the river tribes by the water.

Without guides we couldn't possibly have found our way. It is often very difficult in jungle travelling to tell where the path really is. The natives have a way of marking it by bending down or snapping little twigs as they pass. In this way they follow each other through the densest jungle with-

HEAD-HUNTERS AT KANINGAU WITH WHOM WE LIVED. ALL MEN

TWO HEAD-HUNTERS, ONE PROUDLY FEELING THAT HE LOOKS THOROUGHLY EUROPEAN

out the least difficulty, and through places where to our unpractised eye there seems absolutely no trace of anyone having been before. Even on the paths which are more or less worn, travelling is not easy, and any dreaming has a rude and speedy awakening, as there are constant invisible spikes and stumps and loops of creepers and roots of all kinds sticking out everywhere, as if their one object was to trip you up. How the men manage at all with their bare feet is difficult to understand, and every few hundred yards an old tree trunk lies right across your path, which has to be scrambled over somehow.

The Muruts are always moving on, so they never spend much time on their roads, and they are not keen to make the paths leading to their homes too clear for other tribes. They wish them to be mazes, and from what we saw of them they certainly are!

The jungle is very grand. We used sometimes to find ourselves at the entrance of the most glorious grassy glades, more beautiful perhaps in their way than anything we have ever seen. Far, far above our heads, a ceiling of interlaced branches with wonderful creepers of every kind falling down from it, many of them right to our feet. They grow with a luxuriant abandon and beauty which

can only be seen to perfection in tropical virgin jungle, the trunks of the trees almost hidden with feathery graceful ferns, hanging one above the other, a cascade of loveliness; fronds of maidenhair, measuring feet instead of inches, and other beautiful plants found in miniature in our hothouses at home, flourish there on the same scale.

The awful part of it was that we could only enjoy it all for such a very few minutes. There it was always, and as we stood gazing and wondering at every fresh vision of enchanting beauty, it was pain to feel that we could neither take it with us nor show it to those we loved best in the world, and also that in all human probability we should never see that special spot, that special glade we were revelling in, again.

When the Creator is tired of looking at us and what we have made ourselves, it must be wonderfully restful to Him to look down on such a scene, and He must feel again and again that certainly the world as He made it *was* good.

CHAPTER X

AMONG THE HEAD-HUNTERS

AFTER a tiring and difficult walk we arrived at the Romanow town, which consisted of two or three villages, each village, with all its different families, living for safety in one very long house, to the chief of which we were taken. It looked like a very long shed, as it was built upon piles ten or twelve feet from the ground and had no walls, only a floor made of split bamboos laid an inch or two apart, very convenient for lodging no dust, and for throwing down any odds and ends you may want to get rid of, and a very high palm-leaf roof, which slanted right down below the floor, and so, unless you were underneath, entirely hid the fact of there being one.

We were welcomed with great courtesy by the chief and given the further end of his village, or rather house, to live and sleep in; and as we stood at the top looking down, a sea of faces met our eyes—men, women, and children gazing with

bated breath on the first white man or woman they had ever seen.

They had heard of white men, and some of them had seen them, and they certainly were extraordinary enough; but a white woman!—words evidently failed them, as their wide-open mouths and vacant faces testified; and except for our own voices, not a sound broke the dead silence with which those hundreds of eyes watched our every movement. From then to the day we left we had absolutely no privacy. Their various works fortunately called them away sometimes, but they were determined to lose nothing, and I was never without a small audience. I got quite clever at dressing and undressing under a sarong, while they all sat round patiently, watching and longing for the moment when I should drop the sarong, so that they might see what transformation had been going on. It was all like a very thrilling play to them.

I found, as we thought, a really private place for bathing in a stream not far off. We pretended to be going in the opposite direction, and then we doubled back when we were out of sight, and Dick sat within calling distance at the top of a small hill between me and the village to keep off all intruders; but it was no good. The natives

THE CHIEF HEAD-HUNTERS OF THE KANINGAU SETTLEMENT

A HEAD-HUNTER WOMAN WINNOWING RICE

had hidden themselves most successfully, and only when I had finished, crept away through the trees on the opposite side.

I was a constant excitement to them, and one day when I was sitting in the house, a very old woman could bear no longer the suspense of not knowing whether white skin felt the same as black, so she summoned up all her courage and bore down on me; the other people delighted at her pluck, and thrilled to know the result of her investigation. She came nearer and nearer, in a creepy, squirming way, as if she was treading on hot coals, and when she was quite close she suddenly put out a skinny finger and touched my hand, and then drew back very quickly as if it had burnt her. I laughed, and my audience all joined in delighted.

One-third of the house all up one side was boarded off, and divided into extraordinary little boxes for the women and children. The kitchen and store-room were also there, and the whole place looked very like an untidy hen-house on a large scale. The kitchen was very simple, just a flat stone fireplace, with no means of carrying off the smoke, which was allowed to escape where it liked.

At night we all slept in one serried row, packed

like sardines, the whole way down this hugely long house. I slept at the top, then Dick, then all the other men quite close up to us, only divided by a mosquito curtain and a shallow step, and our only means of going in and out was by more or less swarming a very thin nearly perpendicular trunk of a tree with notches cut in it. This was stuck up at the extreme end of the house, right away from us, and I shall never forget it, as I was very ill once up there, and the picking my way in a half-fainting condition at night over all those sleeping and never-ending men's legs whenever I wanted to get into the air, and the swarming backwards and forwards at the other end, is still almost like a nightmare to me.

This all living together in civilised countries would mean endless rows; but all the time we were living with these head-hunters we were struck with their gentleness and the extraordinary peacefulness of their home life. Countries outside the pale of civilisation certainly teach us a great deal.

They have much less vice than we have in many ways. The breaking of the Seventh Commandment was among the Muruts an almost unknown crime, punishable with death.

In those crowded houses their girls are as safe

and sacred as if each of them were under lock and key. Civilisation and education, with their attendant harpies, have not yet reached them. They are still unenlightened enough to be moral! Europeans are very kind; there is nothing they aren't ready to do for the benefit of savages. The only struggle is who shall do it first; and missions of every kind, political and otherwise, come pouring out, all treading on one another's heels in their haste to improve the welfare of the savage, and to help all coloured races.

The Chinese are smoking too much opium—out comes a mission to prevent, if possible, this awful crime, leaving happily behind it, because unconscious of it, a far greater curse in the cigarette smoking at home, which at the present moment is carried to such excess that it is undermining the strength and usefulness of thousands of our men and boys.

The poor Malay has no religion, and out comes a mission—not to live with him and gradually to teach him Christianity, as a handful of men are doing in some parts of Borneo, giving their whole life to the work because they care for what they are teaching, but to make a comfortable living for themselves by supplying him with Bibles. He is absolutely untaught, but ten thousand Bibles in

ten thousand pagans' hands sounds so well; and the people at home who, in all good faith, send out the mission, don't realise that the Bibles are no more use than ten thousand copies of the Koran written in Arabic would be to ten thousand of our English poor people, and they may be put to uses little dreamt of by those who found the money for them. In Sandakan alone I should be afraid to say how many copies were bought up by the Chinese storekeepers, because it was the cheapest form of paper, and just the right size for wrapping up tobacco!

A report is spread that the savage head-hunters are killing each other, and out come more missions. They *are* killing each other, it is quite true. We lived with them, but we never went to sleep without a revolver under our pillows for fear they should take it into their heads to kill us too. The ruling passion of their life is fighting, and just as we ask our friends to come and have tea, they ask theirs to come and get a few heads from a neighbouring tribe.

The Dyaks take only the hair, and fasten scalp after scalp to their hunting knives with great pride; but the Muruts must have the whole head as proof of their prowess.

They decorate their houses with them, and you see them above you as you lie down to sleep.

One day I was groping my way along one of their houses, which was very dark, when I knocked against a lot of heads all hanging up together. It wasn't at all nice. But there is nothing revolting in their head-hunting; they fight fairly. It is their chance of winning renown and showing what they are made of. The only low part of it is that a woman's head, owing to her longer hair, is prized even higher than that of a man; but the whole thing is a thrilling game to them, full of excitement and danger. There is nothing unfair in their warfare; both sides are doing the same, and man after man wins his spurs in feats of pluck and daring, which form the theme for their war songs and their weirder war dances in the long dark evenings.

I don't want to stand up for head-hunting, it isn't nice! We civilised nations call it murder, and it is murder. But who are we to throw stones?

Aren't the means we take to satisfy our unquenchable thirst for gain, murder? Isn't the sweating that goes on in so many of our trades murder? Tailoring, shirt-making, straw-plaiting, lace and box and nail-making, and how many more? Do any of them bear looking into if we want to feel that as a country *we* do not murder? Isn't the wholesale destruction of body, soul, and

spirit, which drink and gambling and immorality are carrying on hourly at our very doors, and inside many of them, filling our hospitals and lunatic asylums and graves, isn't that murder? And in our murder are any good qualities necessary? None!

But fighting brings out the noblest parts of a savage, and in their home-life love and content reign; but civilised murder means misery and discontent, and homes turned into hell.

If we took a being from some other planet and made him look at the two pictures, Barbarism and Civilisation, side by side—Paganism and Christianity—I don't think his verdict as to who wanted the most teaching would be the same as ours.

I wish Christianity could be taught these Muruts in all its primitive simplicity without any book-learning, as the moment a boy knows any English, the usual accompaniment to learning Christianity, his head is completely turned with his own grandeur, and he goes home, not helped to do his duty, but utterly unfitted for what should have been his future life. It doesn't matter how slight his knowledge of English may be, it is too much for his brain, and all his people see of the effect of Christianity, is an absolute dissatisfaction with and contempt for his people and his home!

As a general rule, given two boys out of the same family, one a pagan the other a so-called Christian, the one will be ready to use his wits and his hands and do anything you want, and the other will be absolutely useless, hoping some day to be a clerk, and meanwhile determined not to lower himself by any manual work. With them a little learning is certainly a very dangerous thing!

It is all wrong that when looking for servants you instinctively shrink from any boy calling himself a Christian, and you at once find he won't suit you; yet, so it is. Christianity is generally a cloak they put on when other trades fail, and means nothing except, I suppose, to them, a possible chance of taking in a new-comer.

It would be very grievous if the Muruts we lived among should have their heads turned by education; but if they could be taught quite simply by word of mouth in their own language the story of the Redemption, and then could be given a real altar with real sacraments to a known God, instead of their superstitions and altars to an unknown overruling Being, who is always requiring propitiation, their head-hunting would be a thing of the past, and with that exception there would be little for them to unlearn—which is saying a great deal.

CHAPTER XI

AMONG THE HEAD-HUNTERS

THE Muruts are a dark race compared to other of the inland tribes, and have some customs peculiar to themselves. Among other things they have a reputation for making the famous Upas poison specially venomous. This poison is taken from the bark of the Upas tree, and, mixed with the macerated root of the Bima palm, has most deadly effects on man and beast, startling and terrible convulsions coming on almost at once, followed by a state of coma, which soon ends in death.

The upas tree is very large, twelve feet in girth. To make the poison the bark is split a little and juice oozes out which gets quite hard in an hour or two, and looks like light-coloured Spanish liquorice and tastes intensely bitter. Alone it is harmless, but when mixed with bima, in the proportion of two upas to one bima, it becomes very poisonous.

TENGARA MURUT FISHERMEN

INTERIOR OF A ROMANOW HEAD-HUNTERS' VILLAGE
WHERE WE STAYED

They spread it over the heads of their darts, which, in this way, become as deadly as when thrust into a dead body after decomposition has already set in, which is their other means of preparing these death-carrying missiles, many incantations being muttered over them at the same time to increase their potency.

They are very reverent with their dead, taking great care of their graves. We used to find large mounds built up over them, and above that again sheds erected to protect them from the rain, under which they hung bags of food which they constantly renewed to appease bad spirits who might otherwise disturb the rest of their departed.

They are very particular about their times of mourning, joining in no festivities of any kind while it lasts.

One night when they had a dance the chief and his wife sent one of our Dyaks to ask us to excuse them, as their little girl had died nearly a year before and they were not yet out of mourning.

They sometimes embalm their dead with the same Barus camphor the Egyptians formerly used. It is much better than the ordinary camphor we know, and the trees abound in the jungle, but they are not used till they are about a hundred and fifty years old, and though many of them

yield oil, it rarely turns to this valuable gum-camphor, which is worth about £3 a pound.

These camphor collectors, who know their work, can tell if the tree is ripe, and then by making incisions in the trunk they know if they will find the solid gum, as, if not, oil oozes out. But if there is camphor, they at once cut down the tree and split up the trunk, and there in the heart of it, all in one cell, they find a roll of the precious gum up to 25 lbs. in weight, according to the size of the tree.

The men collect a certain amount of other jungle produce too: malacca canes, gutta-percha, india-rubber, and beeswax.

The whole of the jungle swarms with bees, and millions of tons of beeswax and honey might be collected every year. Fifty to one hundred bees' nests may be found in one mengalis tree alone—a large tree, with a trunk seven or eight feet in diameter, of which bees seem especially fond.

In order to climb into the branches, which always grow very high up, the bee-hunters peg in saplings against the trunk, one above the other; then they stupefy the bees at night with smouldering weeds, so that the nests can be easily taken.

The bees generally swarm, I am thankful to say, a hundred feet above ground, but one day, when we were forcing our way through some thick bush, we unwarily disturbed some bees which had made up their minds to swarm quite near the ground. They made, of course, straight for us, and stung us horribly. The agony at first was so bewildering we could hardly think. We just plunged blindly on; but the pain soon went off, as, happily, they weren't hornets.

Another time, when Dick was stung by a large, very poisonous hornet, he was ill for two or three days with simply excruciating pain. Two stings at once are said to kill you, and, judging by the effect of one, I can well imagine it.

The Muruts, like all the other Malay tribes, take good care not to overtire themselves with too much work. Their staple food is fruit, vegetables, and rice, and they are absolutely self-sufficient, growing everything necessary for their food and clothes, and also plenty of tobacco, the one luxury which has grown into a necessity to them all.

Their clothes don't require any great ingenuity or an overabundant amount of cotton, as the men only wear a band, except when they go out in the blazing sun, when they sometimes put on a strip

of cloth about two yards long, with just a hole in the middle for their heads.

The women's only dress is a petticoat about ten inches long, which they sling on in some marvellous way below their hips.

They spin the cotton, and then dye it either indigo or black, and then weave it with little rough hand-looms, very much like those used by the cottagers in Scotland.

There were fortunately no pigs under the house where we were staying, but quantities of them were kept, and the natives will only eat their own home-fed ones, or wild ones killed in the chase, as they know on what refuse they are always fed.

The joy and greed of our "boys" when Dick got a wild boar was too disgusting. Meat, of course, couldn't be kept long, so they were determined to make the most of it, and I simply can't say how many pounds of it, all in one sitting, they managed to consume before they were satisfied.

The flesh of a wild pig, however, is not the least like pork; it is much more like beef. The tusks of these boars are sometimes very good, measuring about six and a half inches from the root to the tip.

The Muruts are great hunters, and are wonderfully clever in the way they fling their spears, and

for monkeys they use sharp little darts, which they throw a long distance with most unerring aim.

They know nothing of the outside world, only of the tribes living round them.

If a gathering of the tribes is needed to make war, a piece of stuff, with as many knots as days to elapse before the rising, is sent round to all the head men; and, on the other hand, if peace is proclaimed, a piece of rattan similarly knotted is sent.

They take the nails as well as the heads of their enemies as war trophies, and beautify their houses with them.

The women have a bad time when war is going on, as, besides working by day and dancing by night in celebration of every victory, their heads are much sought after.

They wear wonderful ornaments of every kind. The most usual are coil upon coil of brass wire round their wrists and arms and legs, extending sometimes from their ankles to more than half-way up to their knees, and they wear such a mass of earrings running up the edge of their ears and hanging down over their shoulders, that the lobes of their ears are pulled out of place and reduced sometimes to ribbons from sheer overweight and

overcrowding. Among their other jewellery they also had some solid flat brass collars which stuck out round their necks, and must have been most uncomfortable to wear and to take off and on. They used them originally as a protection against other head-hunters, but they weren't wearing them when we were with them, as they had done no head-hunting for two years.

The nearest dangerous head-hunters were about eight miles away, which felt a little too near sometimes to be quite comfortable.

Our Romanows were probably quite friendly with them when we weren't there, but they were a strong tribe, and they refused to give up head-hunting and defied European government, so we gave them as wide a berth as we conveniently could.

Our Bornean police force not being strong enough to cope with them, we with our six Dyak police certainly weren't. I am very glad we didn't happen to chance on them in any of our jungle walks. Two white heads with fair hair would have made, we knew, a beautiful ornament for their village, but we didn't feel at all inclined to be suddenly transfixed by their poisonous darts.

It was very interesting watching our head-hunters in their ordinary everyday life. They were

very nice to me, bringing me presents of rice and vegetables. The only things we had difficulty in getting were chickens. They couldn't bear parting with them. We found, however, among our beads, which we gave in exchange for what we wanted, there were some blue ones which were coveted by everyone; this, of course, sent up their value, and we parted with them very sparingly. We found those people who had never possessed chickens in their lives brought them in, one after another, when the blue beads were going; they were simply magical in their effect. If they hadn't chickens, they brought us any curios they could lay their hands on—quaint, beautifully designed wooden tobacco cases, carved combs, and when everything else failed, bits of home-made cloth came pouring in one after another, and we were brought one or two beautiful krises and swords.

They had food twice in the day, in the middle of the morning and at sunset. The first time I saw it arrive I was dreadfully startled, as suddenly, when we were all very quiet, there was the most awful rush and scramble from every corner of the house, and I discovered two women had just appeared from the kitchen with enormous calabashes full of sweet potatoes and tapioca-root, and every man at the same moment sprang at the dish and grabbed

a root. They were really just like a pack of ravenous dogs after a bone, though there was plenty for everyone, and the moment the rush was over they retired at once to their different corners as friendly and quiet as ever again.

All the time we were there I never heard one ungentle word in the whole house, nor saw a cross look among the children or grown-ups. The women were the water-carriers as well as the cooks, and their cans were large bamboos, every joint making a can; but except fetching water we never saw them doing work out of doors.

Sometimes in the afternoons the men had their hair dressed. A girl would appear with a funny kind of comb, more like a salad fork with very long teeth than anything else. She went solemnly down the room, and the men sat up one after another without a word, and had their long black hair combed out. They generally did the pinning-up part themselves. The girl just did the combing, and left each man's hair sticking straight out behind him in the funniest way possible. The grease on it was so thick that it couldn't fall over their shoulders as ordinary hair would, but it seemed quite easy to do up. The men just curled it round in a big twist at the back of their heads and fastened it firmly up with a single large hairpin,

which was either a curved flat horn or brass thing running into a point.

When their day was over, which, when we were there, wasn't till we went to bed at about nine o'clock, they wrapped a long straight cotton cloth around them and lay down just as they were, without mat or pillow, and apparently went straight to sleep. We did the same in our corner, our head on our pillows and our hand on a loaded revolver, but we never saw any signs of unfriendliness; if there had been, they had us entirely at their mercy, and we should have been dead and buried some weeks before anyone could even have suspected there was anything wrong.

Their fire-making methods were very interesting, but in most parts they were fast disappearing before the advent of matches, which the traders who go up and down the river all carry; but when these can't be had, they produce fire in the most wonderful way.

Some of the men can bring it at once with a broken bit of glass or crockery struck sharply on the side of a well-seasoned bamboo; but two of the most favourite ways of bringing a flame were with fire-saws and fire-drills. The fire-saws consisted of two pieces of bamboo about ten inches long, and one and a half inches wide. One piece

held firm, and the other with a notch in it rubbed hard against it takes, with steady work and a tinder of fine bamboo shavings, less than a minute to light. It begins to smoke almost at once, and both the pieces of bamboo get heated and black. But the fire-drill is the most usual of all ways. It is made out of one of three specially soft woods adapted for the purpose. A rapidly growing tree, Ladang by name, is most commonly used. There are two parts to the drill, a round stick about eleven inches long, tapering from a quarter to an eighth of an inch in diameter, the thicker end rounded, and an ordinary little unflawed slab of wood with a groove cut down one side to let the dust fall through. To work that, a man holds the slab tight between his feet, and taking the thin end of the drill between the palms of his hands, he works them rapidly backwards and forwards, keeping a constant pressure down on to the slab, while he runs his hands up and down the stick. The friction soon wears a hole, but it takes about two minutes to light the tinder properly. The natives do it wonderfully, and Dick can char wood and make it smoke; but I was altogether useless at it, and I should be very sorry for anyone whose dinner depended on a fire lit by me without a match!

They all gave a war dance one night for our benefit. Lit up by torches, it was most weird and realistic. You could see by every movement of their bodies and every thrust of their spears that they were in imagination gloating over a fallen foe.

It was their usual song of triumph after a fight, and I am afraid it must have made them yearn to be on the war-path again.

The trial we went up for we couldn't have at once, as the necessary witnesses were not on the spot and had to be called, and as time with them counts for nothing, waited for. One or two of the witnesses were particularly fine looking, and reminded us of pictures of ancient Greeks—straight-limbed, well-made men, taller than the ordinary Malay, with very good features, and a green band, like laurel leaves, straight round their foreheads added to their look of distinction.

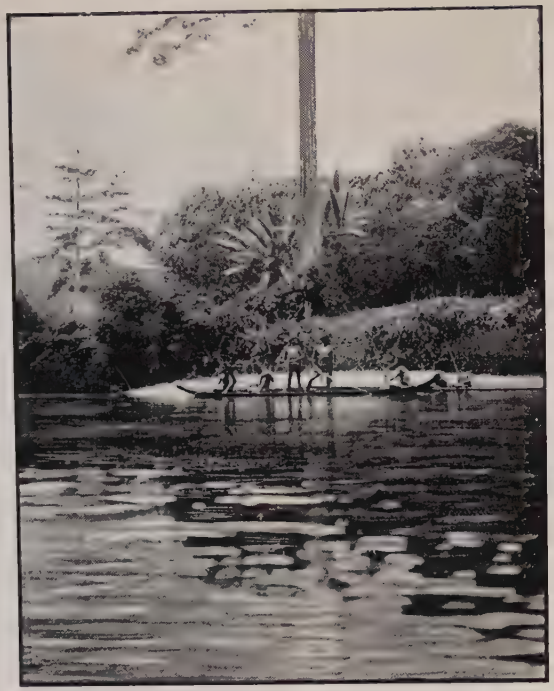
Dick started the trial as soon as he could; but interpreters were much in request, and it took a long time. But everything told against the miserable prisoner, and he evidently knew that his case was a hopeless one, with absolutely no redeeming point, as at first he pretended to be in such excruciating agony whenever the trial was to be brought on, that it was quite impossible for

him to come, or even stand ; and afterwards, when he saw that was no good, he crouched up in a little ball on the floor, and no one could make him move. He was sentenced to death, and an edict was sent out to say that the escaped murderer was to be taken alive, or, if that wasn't possible, dead ; and his body was brought in soon afterwards.

Before leaving our head-hunting friends we dynamited in the river for fish, to their intense excitement. Fortunately we had chosen a good place, and we got a splendid haul. They watched us closely, and when, a few seconds after we had thrown in a small charge, they heard a bang under the water, and directly after that saw masses of fish rising to the surface, they were simply astonished at our magic ; but they didn't waste a minute. Screaming and yelling, they shot out in their canoes with their spears all ready poised to strike directly they got within reach.

Lower down the river and in the sea we had very bad fish, nothing but bones with four or five sharp prongs sticking out in every direction, unlike any others we had ever seen ; but up there in the interior they were a very good sort, very like salmon-trout in looks and taste.

Our journey down the river was mostly without adventure, and we saw little life except monkeys,



MURUT HEAD-HUNTERS WAITING TO SPEAR FISH AFTER DYNAMITE SHOT

HEAD-HUNTING CHIEF AND HIS WIFE WITH THE BAMBOO WATER-CANS THEY ALWAYS USE

and the most beautiful birds and butterflies of every kind, from huge hornbills sawing the air with their wings as they passed over us, or hoarsely crying to each other from the tree-tops, to the brilliant little sun-birds which darted in and out of all the undergrowth; and from the glorious black and green ornithoptera, measuring with its wings open more than half a foot across, to the tiniest blue in butterflies. They were one and all interesting, and many of them dazzlingly beautiful. They are just the touch of brightness and brilliance which the jungle needs, and without which it would be so immeasurably poorer.

Monkeys of various kinds we were able to study splendidly, as the riversides abounded with them, including those wonderful gymnasts, the Silvery Gibbons and the long-nosed Proboscis monkeys, only found in Borneo, and orang-utans, which have large comfortable nests lined with dry leaves, in which the mother and child sleep, while the father curls up on a fork quite near them; but they only stay a few nights in the same nests, as they lead very roving lives, living on fruit, and following up the fruit trees as each lot of fruit peculiar to any district ripens. Durians they are particularly fond of, and mangosteens. They are very strong, but will never attack a human being

unless wounded, and then a male will come to the help of a female, even when he knows he is running straight into danger.

We were in the near neighbourhood of rhinoceros and bears—small brown ones, rather larger than retriever dogs, but we never got the chance of a shot.

A rhinoceros seems to be quite the most senseless, and yet the most dangerous animal there is, as it has no sense of fear, but absolutely no discrimination; it runs at everything, and with equal fury at a heap of dirt or at a human being. It has a consuming longing to knock down all it doesn't understand, and as its intelligence is extraordinarily limited, it spends its time in charging into things.

The most exciting part of our journey back were the rapids, which we shot in the most breathlessly thrilling way. We were following each other in cockle-shells of canoes at express-train speed. We had no time to speak or even to think as we tore through the air, rocks on every side of us. It seemed as if any moment we might be hurled to eternity; but our boatmen knew their work. They hardly moved their paddles, and yet they passed every critical point in a simply marvellous way. One false move and we should have been

done for, but they brought us safely through; and when all was over looked as if they had done nothing in the least out of the common. How they could possibly keep their heads and steer as they did I can't imagine.

CHAPTER XII

RETURN HOME—CHINA, JAPAN, AND THE CANADIAN-PACIFIC ROUTE

AT the end of rather more than two years we started home again, very sorry to leave so many friends behind us, but the idea of home was more welcome than words can say.

We had had a very happy time in Borneo, but month after month of intermittent malaria is wearing, and always having to be on the look out for poisonous creeping things is all right when you are well, but when you aren't, a centipede four to six inches long and half an inch broad, running over you in bed, or a scorpion making itself at home in your shoes, is apt to get on your nerves.

When I arrived out there people were jealous of my English colour; but there was no possible room for jealousy when I came away, as bright yellow parchment skin stretched over bones is not becoming to anyone, so I left no ill-feeling behind me!

We gave a big dance, starting with acting, just before we left, and I shall never forget catching sight of myself as others saw me one afternoon just before, when we put on some trying-coloured acting clothes by daylight. All I can say is, it was a most painful moment for any vanity I had left, though there ought to have been none, as some little time before I had heard two great friends of mine talking about my looks kindly but truly! And the truth isn't always flattering! It wasn't on this occasion. They didn't see I was standing by them, and I am thankful to say that when they did realise, I was able to look so unconscious that they thought I hadn't heard!

Society in Sandakan was divided into two cliques, but they both came down to the Hong Kong boat to speed us on our homeward way, which was very pleasing, though I won't say it wasn't a little difficult to evenly balance our attentions between two different sets of people, who would both talk to us but wouldn't even bow to each other.

But at last we were off, and those who had wished us so well little knew what we were in for; but our boat, fortunately, though old and small, was like a cork on the water, or we shouldn't be here now. We got into the tail end of a typhoon,

and if that really was only the tail, what the head must have been like I daren't think.

We got through it at last though, and arrived in Hong Kong sixty hours late, after certainly a most awful passage. The sea went through every kind of gymnastic. It spun us round like a top, it took us up and shook us in its fury like a dog shaking a rat, and to vary that, it kicked us backwards and forwards as if we were a football. From minute to minute we could never have given even a guess as to the probable position we should find ourselves in the next. We simply lay in our berths and held on for dear life.

How the captain kept his head among it all I don't know. It was his first experience of anything so bad, and I hope his last. We rose again and again on the crest of some huge wave, only to be dashed down into the abyss which lay beyond, and though the sea washed over us, and the deafening roar of the winds and waves was perhaps the most awesome thing I have ever heard, our boat righted herself every time in the pluckiest way. She was determined to bring us safely through, and she did.

At one time we were in great danger, as the screw refused to stay in the water, and insisted on playing about somewhere above our heads, so

that we were completely at the mercy of a most merciless sea.

Cooking was impossible, but we were ravenously hungry after a time, and fortunately there was plenty of cold food. A China boy would suddenly shoot through the door and fall with a bang against the opposite wall, bringing us something to eat. I remember lying on my back gnawing the leg of a goose, much too hungry to mind it having been hugged by a China boy all the way to our cabin, and fingered by various other "boys" probably first.

The sea only calmed down a few hours before we arrived at Hong Kong, and for two or three days after we landed. The ground seemed to be always moving up and down in a most unpleasant way, but it gradually settled down, or rather we did, and any kind of ground was welcome after what we had gone through.

From Hong Kong we went to Canton, as we were anxious to see real China, and not only a European edition of it. We went by river in a very old-fashioned passenger boat. Everything is behind the times in China, in spite of their ancient history. It was very curious to see their paddle-wheel boats still worked entirely by men, and their army drilling and shooting with bows and

arrows instead of guns. It was no wonder they were beaten by the Japanese; the wonder was they had made any stand at all. It was no fight, though; it was weapons of two thousand years ago competing with every latest modern appliance —a bow and arrow versus a Maxim gun—because although the Chinese had guns with them, they knew very little about them.

Canton is a typical Chinese city; millions and millions of Chinamen all massed together like bees in a hive, and the principal streets so narrow that when you stand in the middle you can all but touch both sides at the same time. There are, of course, no carts nor carriages; but even if two carrying chairs meet one another, one has to back into a shop till the other has passed.

The shops are all open on to the streets; they have no front wall, and in one after another we saw the most beautiful embroideries, both old and new, though the colouring of the new work was too startling and vivid to be pleasing.

We saw nearly everything worth seeing, as a Pole in Borneo had given us an introduction to a man who had lived in China for years, and he was most kind to us and took us everywhere himself. Just then we were particularly glad to have someone who knew the ropes, as the anti-

European feeling in Canton had been so strong that no one for a time had been allowed to go there, and we were among the first—if not the first—to go after the restriction had been removed.

The Buddhist temples were great landmarks in the place, and were most interesting with their very long and broad flights of steps leading to them, up and down which people were continuously pouring, to say a short prayer—which seemed to consist almost entirely in bowing and clapping their hands—and to throw an offering of money into a huge sieve, more like an ash-sifter than anything else. Where the money went to couldn't be seen, but any amount passed through the bars.

The only place we stuck at was the Chinese prison. Many people made for that, we were told, as one of the principal shows in the place. It is certainly a unique opportunity of seeing torture in all its worst forms. Men and women being slowly starved to death, with food only just out of reach, and other equally ingenious devilish means of giving prolonged agony, can be seen there for a mere trifle, and many—even English people—jump at such a chance, and come away with horror that any nation in the world should be capable of contriving such hideous forms of punishment. Their feelings are certainly most creditable,

but whether it ever occurs to them that watching other human beings in speechless agony, just for their own amusement, is hardly a high form of enjoyment, and doesn't remove them far from the Chinese themselves, I don't know.

The Chinese law is terribly severe and cruel, but it doesn't seem to deter the people from crime. They have the strictest laws relating to family life. The breaking of the Fifth Commandment—dishonouring their father or mother, whether dead or alive—and not venerating their ancestors, is with the Chinese the one unforgivable offence. If a son harms his father, it not only degrades both him and his family, but the whole street in which they live. On the other hand, a father may kill all his children, and no one has any right to say a word.

We had great feeling over a case in Borneo. A Chinaman, the servant of a friend of ours, and a very excellent servant too, always sent his boy to the Roman Catholic school in Sandakan, and the boy only went home on Sunday afternoons.

After some years, when he was about twelve, he told his father he was a Christian, and his father gave him the most awful thrashing. This happened week after week, but still the father sent him to school, and still the boy refused to give up

THE AUTHOR

DICK IN OUR AFRICAN BUSH DRAWING-ROOM

Christianity. The thrashings were so severe, that the lady whose servant the man was could hear from her house, and told him at last she would stand it no longer.

The father then settled to take the boy to China, as North Borneo was under English law, and you are not allowed by English law to murder your children. But Father Byron, the head of the Mission, was naturally not going to sit down quietly and see the death of a child who had already shown himself most plucky and brave, so he smuggled him out of the country just in time. Directly it was known, a storm broke over Father Byron's head; but the child was safe. Feeling raged very high between us all. Half Sandakan said no one had any right to interfere between a father and his child, which sounded very right; but the other half said there were exceptions to every rule. The funny part of it was, that I was down on the same boat on which the boy was hidden away without knowing it, but I heard Father Byron saying he was one or two shillings short, and I fortunately had money with me, so was unconsciously aiding and abetting the smuggling. And then Dick was the magistrate who had to issue the summons directly afterwards against Father Byron, to his, I am afraid, intense amusement.

The Chinese very seldom kill their sons, but their girl babies they drown, if they have too many, just like kittens. Any day one may be seen floating in the river.

The only class of humanity they are extraordinarily kind to are beggars; they never send one away empty-handed, so the beggar guild is naturally a very thriving and rich one. Admission to it is earnestly sought after, but so jealously guarded by the existent members that the numbers are more or less kept down.

From China we went to Japan, where we stayed several weeks with some friends.

The world-renowned inland sea we thought very disappointing, and unless we had been told, we should have gone right through it without knowing it was even supposed to be beautiful.

Our first view of Japan altogether was not what we expected. The villages and towns looked particularly insignificant and uninteresting, but winter is not the time to see things at their best; and when we got to know the country it all seemed very different. We went to several different towns—Nagasaki, Kobi, Tokio, and Yokohama among them—and we stayed long enough in the country to, anyway, partly learn to distinguish real art among all the, at first, bewilderingly

beautiful, but often tawdry results of Japanese skill and handiwork, which we saw all round us.

They are certainly a marvellously clever people. Their paintings, embroideries, and carvings are of their kind matchless; even the lowest classes seem to have an innate artistic sense capable of the highest development.

Perfect finish and grasp of detail is perhaps the strongest characteristic of all their work, whatever it may be. They have certainly learnt what we as a nation and as individuals find so terribly hard to realise, but what that greatest of all art masters, Michael Angelo, taught so long ago, that: "Little things make perfection, little things mar perfection, and little things are the greatest part of perfection!"

Nothing with the Japanese is too small to matter. Look at their paintings, their china, their Satsuma ware. Examine it with the strongest magnifying glass, and nothing, down to the antennæ of a butterfly, is wanting. Look at their mosaic work, their inlaid lacquer work, their metal work, their iron enamelled with gold and silver, their embroideries! It is all wonderful, and of its kind perfect.

And another point which has helped to make the Japanese so successful is that they are never

satisfied with second best, and before deciding on what is really best, they take good care to know; they have far-reaching, unsatisfied ambition, and they are never too conceited to learn.

They are the very opposite to the Chinese. Progress is their god, and they must always be learning something new. They meant their army and their navy to be second to none, and they have done everything in their power to make them so, and to prove them so, as we have had ample chance of seeing this last year. They have not only sent their own experts to Europe to travel everywhere, and to find out the very best methods of doing everything, but they have paid the highest prices to European experts to come to Japan to teach them what they couldn't otherwise have learnt, and they deserve to succeed. No care nor thought has been spared, and no want of money allowed to stand in the way of the advancement of their people and their country. And they have not only thought of the outward effect, but here, as in their art, every detail has been looked into, and everything, down to the smallest strap or button, copied from the latest and best model.

They are extraordinarily gifted, and they have great virtues; patriotism developed to the very highest degree and capable of any sacrifice,

thoroughness and infinite patience in their work, and devotion to each other; but they are not Christians, and judging them even from a pagan point of view, their standard of morality is a woefully low one. They have no standard; the most rudimentary morality is practically unknown to them, and yet you feel people capable of so much ought to be capable of more. Why, when you are looking for maid-servants, is it not only difficult, but impossible, to find moral ones? Many of them don't take to a bad life naturally, but are forced into it by their parents, as it is the most paying of all lives, and, finding their own race not quite so lucrative, many a sobbing girl is sold against her will to one or other of the numerous houses which caters for the supply of foreigners. Here, as in everything else, the demand creates the supply; and who is responsible? The demanders, who represent to a large degree .Christianity and civilisation, and who flatter themselves that in Japan, anyway, they can do no harm, as, in that respect, it is impossible to make it worse than it is already; or the suppliers, these brilliant untaught children, with their overruling longing to be Western in everything, who for years and years, since they first began to wake up, have been studying the lives of

those living among them, the representatives of the most advanced known civilisations, and, taking as their models just those who, instead of living up to any standard of their own, have thought that out there nothing matters, and have lived down to the people among whom they found themselves. They have thus, with their pernicious example, perhaps for ever influenced for bad the lives of possibly one of the greatest nations the world has ever seen. In future ages, who will be responsible? Will it help anyone to say, "Yes, but you don't understand; they look upon things in such a totally different light from what we do, when *we* were the nurses who tended them in their infancy, and who showed them and taught them all they knew?" Surely not! And work as the Church may and does, how is it possible for it to get hold of a people when the lives of all its known members are at utter variance with everything it teaches? Should we ourselves make use of what was said to be a great privilege, if we first had a chance of seeing that its almost invariable result on the people who already possessed it was cancer of the worst description, and of just that malignant type which it claimed to keep away? Then why, looking from a Japanese point of view, should he become a Christian?

They are also great liars. You can't believe a word they say; and even during their war with China, when all the Chinese had to leave the country, they had to make an exception in the case of the Chinese bank-clerks, and ask them to stay, as they didn't dare to put their own men in such places of trust.

Never trust them and never believe them; they would always rather lie than tell the truth, though their lies are often only from excess of politeness. Directly you ask them anything, they at once wonder what you would like the answer to be, and then they try to suit you, even though they know you must find out there wasn't a word of truth in anything they said, in another few minutes.

They are quite the politest and yet quite the rudest nation I have ever seen. If they know you, nothing is too good for you, and they don't know how to abase themselves or glorify you enough. They bow and scrape all over the place, and introduce their relations to you as if they were the scum of the earth and you were royalty. No epithet is too opprobrious to be hurled at their undeserving heads, while they endow you at the same time with every imaginable grace and virtue. Even two poor people meeting each other in the street bow down three times to their knees before

they speak. It must be a most painful way of saying "Good morning," when you have had rheumatism in your back; but the man who looked after our ponies when we were travelling went even further. He used to kneel in the doorway with his head on the floor, so intense was his respect.

It is most amusing to watch it all; but if they don't know you, they are far ruder than anyone would imagine possible, and they would always rather push you out of their way than get out of yours. A railway station is the time to see that part of their character—*best*, I was going to say, but rather—at its *worst*. When the train stops at some big junction where many people are getting out, those who wish to get in never dream of waiting, but try to scramble in at once, pushing and fighting their way against those who are coming out. The whole scene is one of the wildest confusion; masses of people locked together and swaying backwards and forwards, all of them determined not to give in. In a very short time, however, everything is quiet and in order again, and how they can so quickly calm down after getting so excited I can't imagine.

Before we left Japan we went up into the interior, which was very interesting. We first

went to Nikko, where all their grandest temples are, and the painting and carving was certainly most wonderful; but we hadn't been in Japan long enough to be able to admire their absolutely hideous statues of Buddha, or their still uglier devils. They are said to be "perfect art," and people rave over them; but then they rave over Golliwogs, and like them they evidently want educating up to to appreciate properly; and with me I am afraid it would need an almost hopeless amount of education, impossible to get into one lifetime—judging, that is, by the effect on me of a Golliwog. I constantly hear them spoken of in the highest terms, and I have looked at them again and again; but I still fail to understand why any child in the world should be taught to think them beautiful, or even be allowed to have anything so hideous to play with. My own child has never been allowed one, though I quite see my feeling about them shows an absolute want of humour, as anyway they are intensely funny, and even that I fail to see; but after seeing the "perfect art" statues at Nikko I realise that a Golliwog may be perfect art too!

Nearly all the people seemed to be Shintoists or Buddhists, and the priests were very courteous to us, waving a sort of fly-whisk, which seemed to

form an important part of their devotions, over us, and providing us with soy, the drink of the country, and little cakes, without asking or expecting any money in return.

They have no need of money ; they are well supplied. A man who is thought worthy of filling the high post of training and educating others never has to bother about his own bodily needs. The members of the temple in which he serves see after that. It is only the members of the Christian religion who give their priests barely enough to live on ; it is only with us that it is possible for a man to be working from morning till night for others, and at the same time be starving himself.

It was a grand country, right up in the interior of Japan. We hired ponies and went a most beautiful tour through mountain, and river, and lake scenery ; every mile seemed to be lovelier than the last.

Water so adds to the beauty of any picture, and Japan is most plentifully supplied with both lakes and rivers. Some of the waterfalls were quite magnificent ; they are, I believe, the finest in the world after Niagara.

The inns are very quaint, quite clean, but absolutely no furniture. I shouldn't at all mind being

a housemaid in Japan, as directly my floor was done my whole room would be finished, and no bothering tables and chairs and little cabinets in corners would come in the way of the sweeping.

You are supposed to sit cross-legged on the floor, which is covered with very clean, fine matting, and the walls are made of the same sort of paper you find at the bottom of a macaroon, but thicker. In the evening they brought in our beds, which they made up on the floor, very warm and comfortable and clean, but I don't know where they keep them during the daytime, and they had no idea of bedsteads.

Our dinner they brought in on two separate tray-tables, standing a few inches from the ground, one for Dick and one for me. The dinner consisted of seven or eight courses, each one on a separate little plate, of which raw fish with soy sauce, the great dish of the country, was one. I am afraid we hardly appreciated it. All the courses were very funny, but some of them quite good. We had no knives and forks, only chopsticks, which we got to use quite cleverly. They brought new ones every time, joined together in the middle to show they had never been used before.

We had no difficulty about baths, as there were

numerous boiling water springs in the mountains, from which pipes were laid on into the villages and inns, and the bath-rooms were plentiful, not like ours, but sunk into the floor. The Japanese bathe in almost boiling water, which is a good thing, as they have no idea of shutting their doors ; but the steam of the water is so thick that you can see nothing. The men's bath-rooms came first, then the ladies', and you were evidently supposed to undress in the passage, as the bath-rooms were very small, almost all the space being taken up by the bath itself.

A Japanese lady went down to her bath one day at the same time I did, and we were both, as I thought, taking off our coats and dressing-gowns, when suddenly she divested herself of every single clo' she had on, and handed them quietly to the bath boy, who helped her down into her bath, and then evidently came back to help me in the same way ; but my astonishment had made me disappear very speedily behind my door, so that I couldn't avail myself of his kindly meant intentions.

They provided us afterwards with toothbrushes, which you just used once and then threw away. They certainly did their best to see after our comfort in every way, and we weren't there long

enough to feel the need of furniture, only to be amused at the want of it.

From Japan we went to Vancouver and across Canada by the Canadian Pacific Railway. How incredulous those who only knew the Rocky Mountains fifty years ago would have been if they could have been told that such a marvellous bit of engineering as the railway which crosses the Rockies would even have been attempted, and how more than astonished if they could see the trains which now cross it daily.

We hardly stopped before we got to Montreal—the tidiest, best-built, most modern, dullest town, or rather city, I have ever seen; and two or three days afterwards we sailed from New York on the *Campania*. We had very rough weather across the Atlantic, as well as across the Pacific, but we reached Liverpool at last, and in spite of the darkness and bitter weather in which we arrived, never was there a more welcome sight.

OTHER EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE WEST COAST

WE are now on the West Coast of Africa, right up in the interior behind our Sierra Leone Colony—not where Miss Kingsley ever went, or I shouldn't dare to write.

Dick has a central base, but we spend a great deal of our time travelling from place to place, as there are only two Commissioners to look after a district of 6,500 square miles, with—excepting the railway, which runs straight through—no means of communication between the different parts of the Protectorate, except rough jungle paths, so that one or other of the Commissioners, unless it is the rainy season, is nearly always on what is called "patrol," *i.e.* walking or hammocking from place to place. Riding is impossible, as horses find the climate more trying than even we

do, and, in the English they talk out here, "no agree to live."

People at home so hate the sound of the West Coast, that when I am coming I just take my ticket and slip off as quietly as possible, feeling in great favour with Dick's relations, and in just the opposite with my own.

The first time was the worst. Everything was done to stop me, and some of the arguments my eldest brother used before he gave me up as hopeless were so forcible and so funny that they make me laugh, however low I am feeling, so they had one very good effect, though perhaps not the one that was meant. One of my little nephews was very cheering too. I told him I would answer his numerous questions when I came home again, and he begged me to say "if" and not "when," as he had a feeling that I might be eaten by cannibals, or killed by a snake, and that at any time when I came in I might find leopards ready to spring just inside my door.

It was none of it encouraging, but more so than all I afterwards heard on board.

There was no other lady going down to the coast, and the sight of my fellow-passengers standing on the dock, waiting for the tender to come alongside, was not more encouraging to me

than I probably was to them. We were a very funny-looking crew, but I think we turned out nicer than we looked, and I certainly met with nothing but the utmost courtesy from everyone, from the captain downwards.

People sometimes say that the captains of passenger boats won't trouble to make themselves agreeable, but that is not my experience. I have been all over the world, and have, with one exception, to which the captains of the Elder Dempster Line do not belong, always found them kindness itself. I often pity them most heartily, and unless to start with they have an angel's temper and a very broad back, I would advise them to try something else.

We stopped at Grand Canary and Teneriffe on our way. They are lovely islands, and the Moorish-Spanish towns, with their dark, dirty, picturesque people, and everywhere fruit and flowers, have a fascination peculiarly their own.

Conakry was our next stop, and my first view of the coast, a pretty, well-laid-out town in French territory, where we were lavishly entertained by a Greek trader who had stored my mind with rules of health on the way out.

Every other person you meet out here is kindly ready to do that, and if you only look interested

and listen quietly you get the most amusing amount of contradictory advice. No two opinions ever agree, and yet they are all given with the confidence and authority only found generally in an undergraduate after his first year at college, and judging by their looks, very few people seem to have found their own special treatment a success.

The colour of the people at Conakry, who many of them try to combine absinthe with a West Coast climate, is better imagined than described.

Finally we arrived at Freetown, the loveliest place on the whole coast; but occasionally, a man arriving there goes straight back by the next boat, out of sheer terror of all the evils that lie before him. Perhaps it doesn't show very much spirit, but people should travel on the West African line with old coasters before they judge too hardly. The one idea of many of them is to terrify new-comers with all the ghastliest stories they can collect. They tried it on me, but didn't find it had enough effect to make it amusing. Some people, however, unfortunately for themselves, grow pale with terror, and then are not spared; and the worst of it is, so many of the stories are true.

The West Coast has a great deal to answer for.

That the boat I came home last with stopped for a funeral five days running rather speaks for itself. The list of deaths and ruined healths is appalling, and it often seems as if England didn't much care what happened out here, as if, for some reason, her countrymen in West Africa hadn't the same claim on her as those whose lot is cast in healthier parts of the world, and as if their services, although carried out at a far greater personal risk, were not considered of the same value. The best that can be said of the climate is, that it is possible for individuals to live and be well out here if they take every precaution, if they don't stay out too long at a time, and if they never come back after blackwater fever, and not too often before.

Dick met me at Freetown, and we were invited to Government House, where we spent a most enjoyable week, and everyone we met during that time was most welcoming and kind, but I am thankful I don't live there.

The whole town has a stifling atmosphere, physically and morally. It gives one a cramped feeling, a longing to break through something which every place abroad or at home always gives when there isn't enough to talk about, and people's main idea is to find out the weak point in everyone else, and to dish it up and serve it in every possible

way till the staleness of it sticks in your throat. I love a bit of scandal, and other people's failings are often most amusing; but after a time they are quite as boring as a constant repetition of their virtues would be, and there are a good many people in the world who never seem to realise that.

The black community of Freetown, the Sierra Leonians proper, pride themselves on being intensely English, and many of them have been to England; but as the type on which they have, for the most part, moulded themselves has been that of the most *outré* 'Arries and 'Arriets—check trousers, loud waistcoats, heavy gold watch-chains, and the latest thing in ties and canes—the result is not pleasing, particularly as their only idea of an English gentleman's manner seems to be boisterous and offensive familiarity.

Up-country, among the native tribes in the interior, it is very different; you meet with far less education, but many more gentlemen. Nothing could be more courteous than most of our chiefs and head-men. They never force their company on us when it is not wanted, but it seems their pleasure to do all they can for our comfort.

The Sierra Leonians look upon themselves as the same as us, and on the real native tribes as

BANGGI RIVER FORD AT KWALU

something so immeasurably inferior, that they really aren't worth reckoning. They would be surprised if they knew the absolute contempt in which they are held by the chiefs. In the war, so bitter was the feeling against them, that if it hadn't been for our army they would all have been destroyed.

When we left Freetown we travelled to Moyamba, our base, by the new railway, which passes through most beautiful country. We started in quite respectable carriages, but half-way up we were turned out into open trucks, and an awful thunderstorm came on, and blinding, drenching rain, so that in a few minutes water was swishing up and down, and we were soaked from head to foot.

We were a ludicrously miserable-looking crew when we arrived at last and were turned out on to the platform ; but we soon got in, and the comfort of a bath, and dry clothes afterwards, was almost worth the soaking.

There is nothing much to say about Moyamba. The Commissioner's house and the frontier officers' quarters and the barracks lie close to the station, and half a mile further on, on the side of a hill, running down to the river, a large, badly-built, rambling native town of mud houses. I like it,

because everyone living there, or passing through, has made it so particularly nice to me, but otherwise as a place it has nothing special to recommend it.

Dick was supposed to have a house, but the colony's funds were too low to allow of one, so we had to make the best of a little old mud hut with a very airy roof. There were far too many creeping things already there, especially the small kind of centipede which when squashed made a bright phosphorescent light; but except for that it wasn't as uncomfortable as it sounds, except when it rained. But the black doctor, who was put in after us, refused to stay there, and declared it unfit for human habitation, so it was pulled down.

Dick's main work is travelling. Most of the roads are just rough tracks through the bush, and as the natives always follow one another like sheep, and never walk side by side, their roads are only broad enough for one person at a time.

Getting about is not easy. We have hammocks, which are a great help; but constantly it is too rough even for them, and we have to walk or scramble as best we can up and down precipices and through swamps, crossing over them and over rivers too on all kinds of extraordinarily frail bridges.

OUT SHOOTING: MENDI BOY WITH CARTRIDGES

The three principal kinds are: (1) Trunks of trees, often slippery, with no railing to hold on to; (2) stakes put at intervals, crossed and recrossed with sticks or thin stems of trees, which are constantly more or less rotten, so that you have to keep all your wits about you not to catch your foot, or go crashing through; and (3) suspension bridges tied with bush ropes or creepers to trees on either side. They swing about when you are crossing, in anything but a reassuring way, and are only strong enough, in some cases, for one man to cross at a time.

The single trunks are the worst; they often want a good head and a certain amount of courage to tackle, but nothing like as much, as people who have done a good deal of mountain climbing, call nothing.

An uncle of mine, who goes to Switzerland nearly every year, took me with him once, and I shall never forget coming over a glacier to a sheer precipice, except for the narrowest of paths, about twelve feet below the edge. I didn't even know it was there till the guide slipped down on to it, and I found we were expected to follow. I was simply sick with horror. A single false step, and we should have been over into that fathomless void. But my uncle said it was nothing. Beads of perspiration

did stand out a little on his forehead, which was funny, as we had had no hard work, but I wouldn't tell him so for worlds. It was "nothing." Then all I can say is, the dangers of West Africa are less than nothing, as none of them have ever brought back the horror of that precipice to me; but we certainly have to rough it.

There is no chance of a man whose life is spent in patrolling this part of the world becoming effeminate from too soft or luxurious living. There are no comforts of any kind, and there are sometimes great disadvantages. For one thing, except when you are actually on the march, you can't get rid of people—you have absolutely no privacy; the natives are determined to lose nothing, and your every movement is watched with intense interest, just as it was in Borneo. It helps one to sympathise most deeply with royalty, who can hardly use their handkerchiefs without the fact of their having done so being put in the paper.

And for another, if you are going over new ground it is very difficult to arrange where to sleep, as native ideas as to distance are most hazy and misleading. "Plenty far" or "a little drag" may mean only an hour away, and "not far" may turn out to be several hours.

One day we had a very bad time of it. We

arrived between 10 and 11 a.m. at a village on the bank of a large river, down which we had to boat, so we stopped to have our breakfast first, and made very special inquiries as to where the next town was, and when we should get there. They told us we ought to be there at sunset, or anyway not later than 6.30; so off we started in a large kind of flat punt, which took us and our men, about twenty-one in all, comfortably; but the sunset, followed speedily by darkness, came on, and there was no sign of a town.

At last, after what seemed like hours, we reached our creek, and left the main river to find ourselves almost at once stuck fast in a reeking mangrove swamp, and even those who had been to the town before seemed apparently to have completely forgotten its whereabouts. They soon found their memories when Dick turned them out into the mud; but every minute seemed an age to us sitting in that stinking swamp with mosquitoes swarming round us.

We arrived at last, though, and got our food at about 10.30 p.m. It was nearly twelve hours since we had had anything, so we were more than thankful for it; but we have gradually to get used to all kinds of discomforts. One day, when we are starving for our food, we suddenly find a

river in front of us, with the only visible means of crossing it tied up on the other side, and no one within hail; and another day we arrive at our destination to find our "boy" has missed his way, and that he has taken all the keys in his pockets, so that we can get at nothing till he chooses to turn up; or all the kitchen things are upset, and every bottle and breakable thing smashed, and the contents, which we have no chance of replacing, spilled; or, worse still, we are told when we are far away up in the interior that the kerosene is "done finish," which means that the "boys" have been using our supply, and that we shall have to spend the rest of our evenings in darkness; all little things, but they don't seem so at the time.

But patrolling is intensely interesting, as it is a unique chance of really learning to know the people and their ways. A few days on patrol teach you more about the natives than you would know in a lifetime in Freetown or in any other place where your friends and life were European.

We get up in the dark so as to get a good part of our march over before the great heat of the day comes on; pack up, have some cocoa and biscuits, get our carriers under weigh, pay a sleepy chief for our board and lodging, and are off before most of the natives are awake. Later on in the day the

air gets used up, and so scented and heavy that you could cut it with a knife, but in the early morning it is very lovely and fresh. Everything is bathed in dew, and when the sun rises, glistening on every leaf and cobweb, the bush is turned into a fairyland of beauty. There is no romance about a cobweb, but out here, where spiders of every size and colour seem to vie with one another as to who shall make the most wonderful design, there is no sight more beautiful than their dewy veils stretched across the path with the first rays of the sun shimmering over them.

The bush out here is never grand like the jungle in Borneo, but there are many more flowers, which at times are wonderfully lovely, particularly now in December. The rainy season is just over, and they are all in their first bloom, every bush and tree adding something to the general brilliance. Our path is strewn with crimson cups which fall from the trees above our heads, and sprays of a lovely feathery-white flower brush us as we pass. They are one and all most beautiful, and made far more so by their background of dense green bush, relieved by palms and ferns and luxuriant creepers of every kind.

The swamps, too, without which no description of this coast could be complete, have a strange

beauty of their own, particularly at the end of the dry season, when, besides water-lilies, which flourish all the year round, clumps of pure white Madonna lilies spring up on every side. No words can describe the grandeur of an African marsh in the early morning, the sun rising in a crimson sea above a background of high forest trees, and falling in a brilliant flood right across one of these vast expanses of water and flowers and rushes. It is so beautiful that it is pain not to be able to realise more fully the splendours of it all. Only flocks of wild geese to enjoy it, and yet that wealth of beauty is there always, day after day, year after year, unseen by human eye, untouched and so unmarred by human hand; the world as it was made and as it was meant to be—quite perfect.

But extremes certainly meet; the only other place which impresses me equally with the thrilling sense of the real beauty of the world is that much-marred-by-human-hand place, a London slum. Even on nights when hell seems most rampant, when flaring gas-jets light up drunken brawls—always avoided with such wonderful dexterity by the police!—and rough boys and rougher shrieking girls run riot through the streets hurling blasphemous oaths at each other—even then, if you

"HAMMOCKING" ON MAIN ROAD IN THE BUSH

A SWAMP BRIDGE: OUR MEN IN THE DISTANCE

watch unseen the inner working of it all, you will see, in spite of this hideously jarring exterior, the most touching actions constantly going on all round you—actions full of the deepest sympathy and the purest unselfishness. What they were meant to be is still there:

"No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always may be what we might have been";

and a window over a slum will teach one as much of what heaven is capable as even the sun rising on an African marsh or any other matchless tropical scenery.

CHAPTER XIV

ON PATROL

BY 10 or 11 a.m. our march is generally over, and if not, we wait for an hour or two and have our lunch; but as a rule we have arrived at our destination for that day, and we come in and unload and settle down, either in a mud hut or else in the "Barri" or Court House of the village, where all the public business is transacted and everything gossiped over.

The one we are now in is an absolutely open round shed, except for a four-foot wall which runs round the greater part of it. This comes to within eighteen inches of the dried grass roof, and the space between the wall and the roof makes a splendid first row of the dress-circle for the people, as in a good many of the villages they have never seen a white woman before, so there is always a great excitement among them when we arrive; and at this moment they have just found out that my hair is light and long, instead of black

short fur (close to my head) like theirs, so their interest is intense. The men are just as anxious for a front place as the women, and everything I say or do is commented on and every movement copied, as if I were an interesting mechanical toy which had just been wound up for their benefit.

Dressing and bathing are the only difficulties, but we have quite solved them now. I dress before anyone is awake in the morning, and have my bath at night directly it is dark. Our boy prepares it all, and then, when I know where everything is and am quite ready to jump in, I suddenly put out the lamp. It would be more unselfish not to, as it is dreadfully disappointing to my audience, but in this case *my* feelings have to come first, and they don't allow of a light!

When they first see me, if there are enough of them, they can only gaze in stupefied astonishment; but if we meet two or three of them alone in the bush, the mere sight of us generally so appals them that they throw away everything they are carrying and bolt for their lives. The more we go among them, the better they get; but in the unbeaten tracks where they have seen no one they are still miserably frightened, and just as unprincipled nursery-maids scare our children with stories of black bogies, they scare

theirs with stories of white ones. But they very soon get friendly, and bring their naked little black "pikkins" to be admired. The pikkins, when left to themselves, are generally most friendly, and we always have groups of them playing round.

In villages where there is no court house the natives brush out a mud hut for us, and if they wish to do us special honour—which happens, unfortunately, rather often—they plaster the verandah with fresh manure just before we arrive. Well-meant attentions are often very difficult to appreciate, and that certainly is. There are other little disadvantages about mud huts: rats and cockroaches, spiders two or three inches across, and centipedes insist on sharing them with you, and when it is raining you may wake with a cold trickle running down one arm, or you hear the water splashing down on the clothes you are going to wear next morning; and it doesn't improve your temper when you leap up to see what can be done, and find your shoes half-full of water; but fortunately we are generally so tired when night comes that nothing keeps us long awake.

Directly we arrive at any village where we mean to stay, the chief or king comes to tell us "How

BAI KAFARI WITH A RING IN HIS NOSE, AND FOUR OTHER CHIEFS

do!" He then goes away again, and we may hear a tremendous beating of gongs to ring up his head-men. Anyway, he soon appears again in state attended by them all, and bringing chickens and rice, and sometimes a sheep or a goat, which is tugged in, much against its will, behind them. While they are all trooping silently and slowly in, it is etiquette for us to be quite unconscious of all that is going on; and even when everyone is settled the chief still pauses, and then solemnly tells our interpreter he has brought the things as a present, and the interpreter repeats what he has said to Dick. Dick then says "Thank you," and the whole thing is over, and they all troop out again, which seems a little lame after so much formality; but the same thing happens every day, so you get used to it in time. And then there is no sentiment about the present. They give you what they like, certainly, but well knowing you will repay them for everything before you leave next day.

The Timani chiefs, among whom we now are, are very like Old Testament pictures of Aaron and other Jewish high priests, and their long, white or coloured robes, and their staffs of office and mitres, make them look strikingly dignified.

In the afternoon they come back to discuss

affairs of State with Dick. Hut tax and slave questions have constantly to be threshed out, and their difficulties with other paramount chiefs, who won't keep their people in order, and will allow them to make farms on land which doesn't belong to them—"jumping the border," it is always called. Cases for Dick to try are also brought up then, and the way the people perjure themselves is too extraordinary; you can never trust the word of any witness. A man takes a solemn oath on the Bible, or in native fashion by drinking some nauseous stuff and begging that it may choke him and that every other kind of horror may befall him if he says anything but the truth, and then starts lying in the most barefaced way. Even those who have right on their side cloak it so with lies, that it's a wonder they ever get justice, as it takes, whoever is trying the case, all his time to sift out what few grains of truth there may be from the seething mass of lies. A man taken unawares just occasionally gives a true answer, but not if he has had a moment to think.

I was very angry with one of our "boys" one day. I wanted some strong fresh chicken soup in a great hurry for someone who was very ill, and I went down to the kitchen and explained exactly how it was to be cooked: it was to be made in the most

extravagant way, as that was the quickest, and the point was speed. Two or three hours later I went to fetch some, and the cook said it was almost done, but not quite. There were two or three saucepans on the fire, so I asked which it was in; he showed me. I took off the lid, and an empty saucepan met my eyes. His apparent astonishment when he found there was nothing there was far greater than mine; he couldn't get over the queerness of it. The chicken hadn't even been begun; but he had so worked himself into his lie that he didn't know how to give it up, even though he saw he was found out.

Black races certainly have a rooted objection to truth in any form. There is a crook somewhere in their minds, and they can't bear straight ways of reaching anything. You can see it in everything they say and do, and it adds enormously to the complications of any law case, particularly as the police themselves are all experts in the art of lying too. It is no good being angry; they listen quietly, and then start off worse than ever again.

The trials are watched with intense interest by a large audience. The groups of people standing round are very picturesque, particularly the native children and girls with beads as their only clothing.

Many of them are very graceful and pretty, but the moment they put on clothes their beauty is gone.

I suppose the Missions have to teach them to wear clothes, because apparently people get lower-minded as they get more civilised, but for their own sakes it seems a pity. European dress only vulgarises them, and robs them of all their charm. If missionary working-parties only knew what the people their clothes are destined for looked like when they were wearing them, I think they would be really sad; and unfortunately many of the natives seem to get an idea that Christianity means petticoats pure and simple, and certainly those who profess the most devoutness in Freetown and are jarringly familiar with God's name if not with God, simply bulge with petticoats, which stand out all round them.

Father Browne, the head of the Roman Catholic Mission, was deploring the same thing when he was staying with us last year; but he didn't seem to think my remedy of leaving them without clothes practicable. He is dead now; he died of blackwater fever a few months ago, and only those who knew him can realise the void he has left, or how he is missed. He worked unceasingly, and did all he could for everyone, irrespective of

creed or sect. It is difficult for people at home to realise the intense loneliness of a bad illness on the West Coast. Sent down perhaps from the interior to the hospital in Freetown, surrounded by strangers who don't really care if you live or die, or whether you are on the way to heaven or hell, or if they do care, take the lowest view of your moral state, unless what appeals to them appeals to you, a man like Father Browne, full of sympathy and understanding, came as a heaven-sent boon. His cheering presence often charmed away the lowest fits of depression, and there was certainly no man so loved in the whole of Sierra Leone Protectorate or Colony.

We have an American Baptist Mission and a Wesleyan Mission as well as the Roman Catholic Mission at Moyamba, so the natives must be forgiven if they get a little muddled as to what we really do believe!

CHAPTER XV

IN THE BUSH

ONE drawback to this Protectorate is to be found in the secret societies which intersect the whole place.

Two of them, the Leopard and Crocodile Societies, offer human sacrifices from time to time, in obedience to some awful superstition which gives good luck to whole districts as long as they contain medicine made of the entrails of human beings. When that is exhausted there is another murder.

Everything has been done to try and put a stop to this awful practice, but so far without success.

The members of the society meet in the deepest secrecy. Lots are drawn, and the man on whom the lot falls has to provide a victim who can be taken without any fear of discovery. So important is this part of it, that they often fix on wife or child as involving the least possible risk. The murderers are then told off, and, dressed in leopard

skins, they hide themselves in the thick bush, from which they leap out on to the unsuspecting woman or child, digging into their necks a horrible little instrument with three pointed blades, specially made so that the wound they inflict should exactly resemble the claws of a leopard; or else they imitate a crocodile, and lie almost entirely under the water just where people are known to bathe or pass, and then when the unfortunate elected woman comes down alone, they suddenly grab her down and hold her under water till life is extinct.

The natives themselves are sometimes in a state of panic, knowing there are members of these societies living among them, and yet not knowing who, or whether they can trust their nearest relations.

One woman we know of, though, had suspicions of her husband, who, the lot having fallen on him, had promised to sacrifice her, and when one day she was sent by him on an unusual errand, she kept all her senses very much awake, and the moment she heard a rustle, and before two leopard-like things she just caught sight of had had time to spring out of the bush, she fled screaming towards the village, and fortunately the people heard the shrieks and rushed out just in time to save her.

All who are proved to have had anything to do with these sacrifices are hanged, and the Commissioners do everything they can to track down the culprits; but constantly nothing can be found out. The murderers leave absolutely no trace behind them; a dead man tells no tales.

We were staying once in the house of a very enlightened native, close to the scene of two of these murders. He had been brought up at one of the missions, and went in for being a very devout Christian, even down to a starched shirt on Sundays. We heard prayers going on night and morning with his family and household, and I believe they went on when we weren't there too; but at the trial he only escaped hanging by the skin of his teeth. Some link was missing in the chain of strong evidence against him, so he got off; but his guilt was a practical certainty, and the last words said by two of the other men who were hanged, were that it was he who really ought to have been where they were.

In another case, a native Sunday-school teacher was the instigator, which does not speak much for his grasp of Christianity, or his claim to be considered a civilised member of any community. They are improving, however. Cannibalism has practically disappeared within the last few years,

A TIMANI CHIEF SITTING IN STATE

A HEAD TIMANI TOM-TOMMER

and where a short time ago all was chaos, constant wars going on in every part of the Protectorate, and every weak town living in terror of every stronger one, and no one daring to venture unarmed far from their own particular stockaded village, which was bolted and barred every evening at sunset, there is now, since the rising in 1898, peace and comparative safety everywhere. Before that time, a friend of ours out here was begged by one of the chiefs to come and follow up some cannibals who had carried off, among others, two of his brothers.

They were caught red-handed. At first the chief couldn't make out the bodies of his brothers, as they, being large men, had been kept for a special feast; but he suddenly came upon them, and when asked if he was sure, he said with a sigh, "Oh, yes; no one man make so good beef as my two brother!" It certainly was a most pathetic thought.

The war was supposed by many people to be an unmixed evil, but it was bound to come. By putting an end to the slave trade too heavy a blow had been dealt at the influence and power of the chiefs for them to sit down quietly without a struggle. Their principal source of revenue had gone, and they were only waiting their opportunity

to shake off the irksomeness of British rule, and return to their old manners and customs.

In 1898 they thought their chance had come, when, there being no revenue from the Protectorate, every householder was ordered to pay 5*s*. a year towards the expenses of opening up the country. Five shillings was a very inadequate sum compared to the enormous benefits which were being conferred on them, but they refused to pay, and rose in arms against the Government, being backed up by unscrupulous and influential Sierra Leonians, and also by mistaken people at home, who, not knowing anything about the question, thought that the "poor black" was probably being put upon, and the "poor black" himself was so longing to rebel that any pretext served.

The result, of course, was war with all its attendant miseries, bad enough at any time, but always worse when the only fate which lies before those taken prisoner is torture in all its worst forms. But the results have been just what Sir Frederick Cardew, the Governor, predicted, far better than the most sanguine looker-on dared to hope for—the land opened up to trade, and peace reigning instead of chaos; but too many histories of the coast and of that war, some of them more

or less garbled, have been written already, so I will only say I wish England had not apparently so completely forgotten one or two of those who played most important parts in it, who risked their lives day after day, and in the end, when the fighting was over, stayed on in the Protectorate to do the most important work of all, the resettling and pacifying the tribes.

Dick was not there, so I can speak dispassionately; but one of the Commissioners, who has done a great deal for the service of his country, and who years ago was given a D.S.O. and then a C.M.G. for distinguished service, is, after ten years, still here in this Protectorate, still in "the white man's grave," and earning the very liberal salary of £500 a year. Is it adequate?

The climate can, of course, never be anything but trying to Europeans; and added to that, there is the loneliness of the bush, which on many men has the most desperately depressing effect, many of them after a very few months of it being wrecks of their former selves. The very general idea that drink is the one great cause of all the deaths and illness on the coast is quite a mistake.

Excess of drink goes on here as in most countries, and its results, owing to the great heat, are more fatal; but teetotalers get ill just as soon

as those who drink too much ; and a whisky and soda with your dinner, after the sun has gone down, often staves off an attack of fever, and does real good. I don't want to press drink on anyone, but if people know when to stop and have the self-control to do so, they are better with a little ; and, anyway, no one ought to be entirely without it, as after a snake bite whisky is invaluable, and has often saved a man's life who without it must have died. And snakes are an ever present danger.

In the last two or three weeks alone we have come across five or six. Two of them Dick killed, but two or three got away. One of them startled me out of my wits. I was lying reading in a small mud verandah with my back to the entrance, when suddenly there was a scramble and a loud hissing noise, and a huge lizard sprang over the step and disappeared like lightning, chased by a horrible snake. Its head was within a few inches of the lizard and of me when I caught sight of it and leapt to my feet. Fortunately, it was as frightened as I was ; it just raised its head once, but then, to my intense relief, wheeled round and slithered off into the bush. What I should have done if it hadn't I don't know, as I hadn't a stick of any kind near me, and it was

rather too long for a stick, even if I had. Two other times, when I have been indoors, they have fallen almost on to me from the ceiling, or rather roof; and I couldn't count the times we have nearly trodden on them in the bush.

A woman up here was bitten in the thumb a day or two ago, and before we had time to give her anything she was dead.

Our guardian angels must have a great deal to do always, but especially on this coast.

Life in the bush certainly has its drawbacks, and occasionally when you are eaten up by mosquitoes and other poisonous little insects, and centipedes and crawling things will choose you as their playground, and winged things will buzz in your face and fall into your food when you are tired, and driver-ants will insist on marching in an army through your house and taking possession of every hole and corner of it, killing everything they can find, and making you fly out into the bush, perhaps in the very middle of the night, to escape their fiery stings, and black people will smell even more than usual, the drawbacks weigh very heavily; but we often forget them all in the advantages, one of the greatest of which is not having to bother about clothes, and being able to live in short skirts. It turns walking and

CHAPTER XVI

NATIVE LIFE AND INDUSTRIES

THE people are very friendly, and only fail dismally when they are placed in any position of trust or responsibility. A man may go straight for years, but just when you feel he really has proved an exception to the general rule, and have begun to place confidence in him, you find that responsibility has turned his head, and that he is only using any power he may have from being in the employ of the Government as a means of duping the other natives, and extorting money and goods from them.

Why they still trust the Government after the way they have been robbed by those pretending to represent it is hard to understand; but they have mercifully, through everything, kept their faith in the justice of an Englishman.

In their home life they seem, on the whole, happy and contented. Men are the drones and women the workers, but neither side seems to

ONE OF THE RIVER FERRIES

NATIVE VILLAGE

mind the arrangement; and they would probably be astonished if they knew with what feelings of murder we pass a fat man carrying nothing, and his wife walking behind him with a load on her head heavy enough to crush any ordinary woman. But the heads of black people seem to be made of something much harder and tougher than flesh and bone; no weight seems too heavy for them, and even a small child carries a load which would make a European stagger.

Their principal occupation in the year is making their farms, which consist chiefly of rice and cassada — a root from which tapioca is made, and which to them takes the place of bread. The men certainly do help here, by cutting down and burning fresh bush. This is done every year. The same ground is never used till an interval of six or seven years has elapsed, as the earth is so poor that a few months' exposure to the rain and sun exhausts it by washing out and drying up all its good properties.

The women then sow and plant, and in due time reap their crops. The men then condescend to help to harvest them; but the rice has to go through several processes before it is ready, and this hard work is, of course, left to the women. They first thresh it out on the ground with sticks,

and then trample the straw up and down and round and round with their feet, till it is all soft with the constant friction. By this means the rest of the grain all falls out, and is collected up, with a large accompaniment of dust, and part of their daily work is to beat out with huge wooden pestles and mortars, and then winnow, enough for their different families.

The surplus rice is packed up into hampers, and sent down to other places which do not grow enough for their own consumption. It is their main article of food, and each of our carriers eats every day what, with milk added to it, at home would make enough pudding for about seventy people; so they need a good deal in the course of the year.

Coffee grows well here, but none of the natives have enough energy or enough knowledge to cultivate it properly. The only trees we have seen were covered with fruit, but had been allowed to run absolutely wild. The women and children were gathering the berries, and preparing them for market by sucking off the fruity, juicy part round, and spitting out the beans into a heap. It certainly killed two birds with one stone, but it wasn't extraordinarily appetising for those who had ever bought coffee out here.

WOMEN SPINNING

MENDI FISHING GIRLS

Some of the other products of the interior, the collecting of which keeps the women very busy, are palm oil and palm kernels, kola nuts, and cocoanuts, capsicums, ground nuts, bananas, sweet potatoes, and yams. The palm-kernel tree is the most useful on the coast, and when the machine for cracking the nuts—every one of which, without it, has to be done singly—gets better known, and the people realise that the initial sum is more than repaid after a year or two, not to speak of the saving of trouble and time, which so far counts for nothing, the trees will probably be cultivated to a greater extent.

The natives eat enormous quantities of palm oil mixed with their rice, crushed out of the bright red husky covering of the nut; but there is a valuable oil in the kernel too, and the sap of the tree, known as palm wine, makes, when freshly drawn, a very good and cooling drink.

Kola nuts are very valuable commercially, we are told, but from our own experience we can only answer for two things about them. They are more sustaining than any other form of food, but too nasty to touch if you have anything else to take their place. The natives love them.

Another work in which we constantly see the women employed is preparing and spinning cotton.

They are very clever at it; they look about them as if they were doing nothing, and yet never seem to break the thread. The cotton is then used as it is, or dyed blue or brown, and woven, generally by the men, into narrow strips of cloth, which are sewn together and used day and night by them all. At night they are most necessary, as it is sometimes very cold; we have known the thermometer go down as low as 49° when the harmattan is blowing, and that at quite a low altitude.

Most of what they make is very simple. The ordinary country cloth is plain blue and white lines, but now and then you come across real works of art, which have taken years to make, and have wonderful figures of people and animals worked into them.

Another of their industries is hat and basket making from dyed grasses and fibre. Some of the women do them beautifully, but they are all one pattern, so they soon pall.

Hairdressing is another of their arts. Their hair grows about three or four inches, and sticks out all round their heads like fur; but from this they turn out the most wonderfully dressed heads, and sometimes very original ones, as, unlike their baskets and hats, they seldom do two alike. The

OUR HOUSE BEING BUILT

NATIVES WHITE-WASHING, AND AFRICAN HEN!

keynote of their hairdressing is to have partings in every direction, back and front, and then they freak their fancy about the rest, puffing it as much as possible, or plaiting it into the very closest knots against their heads.

The women of one of the Mendi tribes always fasten a small silver plate into their hair. Once done, the same hairdressing lasts for weeks. Their brush and comb is a small pointed bone or horn.

Their clothing, unlike their hair, is not elaborate. Before they are married, beads, and afterwards a straight bit of country cloth, generally blue, which they fold round them from their waist to their knees, and fasten in front with a quick little twist which is apparently more sure than any hooks and eyes could be. The strength of it is really magical. They always carry their babies on their backs instead of in their arms, and this little twist supports the whole weight of the child. It is quite sickening sometimes to see small girls left in charge of big babies prop them on to their backs, throw a blue thing not much bigger than a handkerchief round them, fasten it with this little magical roll, and then dart off romping with other children, with both their arms quite free; but so far I have never seen the baby fall.

Some tribes, especially the Timanis, to make up for their want of clothing, often have their chests and backs very much cut about and decorated with various patterns. They go through untold agonies to make themselves beautiful, as each cut is poisoned with monkey-nut juice, so that it will gather and leave a big mark. The only comfort one can get out of it is that their nerves are not the same as ours; so that I hope they don't suffer to quite the same extent as we should under similar treatment. Their seeming callousness to suffering, even in their own children, to whom they are devoted, is quite impossible to understand. At home, though, there are sometimes people who put on roughness to hide a sympathy too deep to allow itself to be tender, so perhaps these blacks, if we only understood them, aren't as appallingly hard-hearted as they seem to be.

Far the nicest trait in their characters is their devotion to their mothers, and the honour they pay them all through their lives from the first moment they can understand. Their father they may like, or they may not; they recognise no duty towards him; but their mother is something holy to them, whatever she is like, and no one is ever allowed to breathe a word against her.

One evening we heard the most awful shrieks

as we were coming near our house, and we found our "boys" had been thrashing a small boy about twelve, and directly we appeared they came to tell us, in most righteous indignation, that he had spoken disrespectfully of his mother; so Dick, of course, said nothing except that it served him right. Another day a small boy was sobbing his heart out, and at first it was very difficult to find out what had happened; but at last it came out—another boy had said his mother had a big toe! It was a relief it was no worse, but apparently it was quite bad enough.

CHAPTER XVII

FETISH WORSHIP

THE ordinary religion or fetish worship of the natives here is very difficult to describe because it is so complicated, and because we really know so little about it. You try hard to understand, but every new thing you learn makes you realise more and more deeply that, until you are a native yourself, you won't be able to grasp properly all the intricacies of their mind and of their belief.

Wherever we travel in the interior we find fetish signs. At every turn, particularly at the entrance of towns and villages, we are met by mysterious little sheds, from a foot to three feet high, inside which we find lumps of earth and an old cracked calabash or bowl or bits of cloth or soft white balls of medicine. Then at another point we come across bottle-whisks arranged like toy water-mills, and at another huge palm-leaf screens standing back against the bush, with a

swept clearing in front, and behind an ordinary bush track. There is a low doorway in the screen, in which no one can stand upright, and to us the whole thing looks pointless, as anyone can walk round; but that is "Porro ground," and sacred, so no one dreams of going near.

When we first came to the Protectorate and asked what any of these things were, the invariable answer was always "Porro." I got sick of the word, it was so meaningless. No one seemed able to explain it; they always spoke as if it explained itself, and dismissed it with a word or two, as if they felt that if you couldn't understand a simple little thing like that, you must be short of intellect. I have found out at last why they didn't answer—it was couldn't, not wouldn't!

"Porro" is the name of a large secret society of men (no woman is allowed to join), branches of which spread through the whole Protectorate. It is the ruling vital influence in native life, and these screens and huts and other to us meaningless sticks and stones, are to them all signs of this far-reaching power.

Their one idea of worship is an abnormally powerful devil who needs propitiating, and the huts are built to protect the sacrifices they offer to these demons, who are evidently easily taken in;

anything seems to do for them, and only cracked and useless things are offered. They remind me very much of the Chinese, whose idea about their devils is just the same. They are supposed to be satisfied with three things, gold and silver and men's souls; and when a Chinaman dies, his friends scatter gold and silver paper all the way to the cemetery, so that their devil, who is evidently supposed to be a much greater fool than ours, may run off with that instead of the man's soul.

There are "Porros" of every kind, and some with good intention, though there is an enormous amount of rascality mixed up with it all. Any agreement binding two or more people together by a secret sign is a Porro; but the whole thing is often a gigantic fraud, and simply a means of extorting money from the easily taken-in natives by the cleverer, more cunning ones.

Every town of any size has its own Porro bush, and its own Porro men and Porro devil, countenanced and encouraged by the chiefs, for whom they form a valuable source of revenue.

Every new member is initiated with a great flourish of trumpets and a great deal of foolery, and has to pay enormous subscriptions. In the harmless Porro bush the boys often stay for some months, and are taught various things useful to

them in after life. But there is no free education; the parents are all made to pay heavy fees. The guiding lights in this school, whose dictums are never disobeyed, or the results are supposed to be too awful, are the medicine man and the devil. The native doctors, in and out of the Porro bush, are, some of them, really good herbalists, and are much looked up to by the natives, who have the most extraordinary faith in medicine and charms of every kind.

We met a woman lately who had come up from Freetown with a dreadful disease in her face, and our doctors could do nothing for her; so her husband brought her right up here in the interior to one of these "medicine men" to be cured "country fashion," and she is getting better every day. Her suffering was intense, but now she has absolutely no pain, and is evidently on the high road to recovery.

For fevers, too, some of these native doctors have splendid medicines; but, on the other hand, many of them are awful humbugs, and ascribe every kind of magical power to some absolutely rubbishy concoction and charge accordingly.

The intellect of an ordinary native is just like a child's, only full of superstition, so they are very easily taken in. From time to time a few scoun-

drels, anxious to get money, make a Porro bush and run off with children and keep them it may be years, till the parents collect enough money as a propitiatory sacrifice to the devil. He then graciously releases their child. But when they are first taken, they are bullied to such an extent, poor little scraps, just from mere devilry, that some of them die. One of the initiatory amusements is to score a pattern on their backs with red-hot pointed iron pins. You often see men with this marking. The father is allowed to come and see his child, but the mother is never allowed near them. Her fate, if she ever sees the Porro devil, is too gruesome even to be known.

One day we heard all kinds of weird cries near a village where we had stopped to get our food; every woman, at intervals, uttered a wailing moan. We asked what was the matter, and they told us the Porro devil was about, and that that was the only way of keeping him off, as he took care not to come along any path from which he heard this gruesome noise.

When the boys are in the Porro bush there is an extraordinary superstition that the devil is pregnant with them, and that at the appointed time, always coinciding with the date on which the last of the money has been paid, he is delivered,

and the boys go back to their homes, where they are fêted in every possible way, and the devil is supposed to return to the spirit-world from whence he came.

Men of every age and rank are admitted into one or other branch of this society. It is only a question of money, and being bound by certain rules which are not told them till after their initiation. The Porro devil is supposed to be not only all-powerful, but absolutely invulnerable, a sort of unappeased monster ready to wreak an awful vengeance at the slightest offence. It sometimes appears in the villages at nights attended by its court, and every kind of ghastly noise, to awe the people and drive the women trembling behind any covering they can find. It then gathers all the food and money it can lay hands on, and disappears.

Before the incessant intertribal wars ceased, a Porro devil was sometimes a very useful institution, as when two tribes, sick of fighting, asked the chief of another tribe to mediate, he settled matters in a most rough-and-ready way by promising to use Porro against the side which fought next—a no light threat, as it really meant large bodies of his warriors let loose in their land to kill and destroy everything they came across. Now

that is over, but in some parts nothing is done without Porro, and in its good side it often seems a most useful institution, and one which, unlike our institutions, has laws which are never broken.

The terror of a native if he has unknowingly transgressed any of its laws, is extreme. Men sometimes work themselves up into such a state from sheer terror that they become really ill. Porro takes the place of our vestrymen, county councillors, sanitary inspectors, police, game-keepers, and I don't know how many other authorities, who in our country are all supposed to be working for the public welfare ; but in such a quiet, unobtrusive way that it is difficult to realise the power it wields. A bit of rag, a few sticks, a stone, or a little mud, are the only visible signs, but the results where these are found, are : water is kept uncontaminated ; trees laden with fruit are not touched, except by the owner ; the entrances of villages and special bush-paths are kept clean ; fish is preserved when necessary, and a man's property is absolutely safe.

"Bundu" is another at first unintelligible word that you often come across out here. It is also a so-called secret society. There is a Bundu bush as well as a Porro bush, but the Bundu members

are all women and girls, and the society is an absolutely harmless one, with no political importance of any kind.

Every girl, some time between the ages of eight and eighteen, has to go for two or three months into the bush, where she stays with a lot of other girls under the charge of one or two matrons, whose business it is to prepare them for their future lives as wives and mothers of families, by teaching them a certain amount of natural law and whatever in the way of medicine and other things is thought necessary for a well-brought-up black girl to know. They are initiated with a small more or less painful rite, and whitewashed all over, but most of their time is spent in dancing. They go through a course of most elaborate dancing lessons, and no man is allowed to go anywhere near their enclosure.

If for any reason the girls have to change from one Bundu bush to another before they are full fledged, they roll themselves in mats or some other covering which completely hides them. It is a curious sight to see a procession of these very tall mats moving mysteriously along, guarded at each end by a stern duenna.

Of the other societies I have no personal ex-

perience, but we come across all kinds of very quaint manners and customs.

This morning, at about twelve o'clock, an unusual loud chanting noise suddenly broke out in the paramount chief's house, and we found his wife had had a baby at about 4 a.m., and the noise was a song of joy, and men and women were pouring in and out to pay their respects to the mother. We congratulated the king, and asked him how she was; and he said he would send to see—which sounded funny when he was talking about his own wife; but on account of some strange superstition he wasn't allowed to see her for three days after the birth of their child. No Timani man may go into his own house for a week after such an event, but they may all, except the king, see their wives out of doors. The messenger came back to say that the newly-made mother was up and walking about, but she didn't feel very well! Poor thing! I wasn't surprised, but it was wonderfully enlightened of them to let her have a sleep before they started the awesome noise they called a joy song; that alone would have been enough to make most people feel ill.

They celebrate deaths, too, in a peculiar way of their own. The other day I was suddenly startled to find an apparently raving mad woman close to

TOM-TOMMERS PREPARING FOR OUTBURST OF MUSIC

OTHER NATIVE CHIEFS

me. A little child had died in a hut almost opposite ours, and it is etiquette for the friends and relations, however little they care, to sob and wail and scream for hour after hour, breaking out from time to time into the most awful yells and shrieks. They rock backwards and forwards and throw themselves about, and pour earth on their heads and roll on the ground in every kind of filth. It seemed like sacrilege to see a baby child lying so peacefully there without a trace of pain or suffering, and then to hear these raving maniacs round it.

They go on at intervals for two or three days, and how their throats and insides can stand it I can't imagine; the sound alone is so intensely wearying. I hardly knew how to bear it after a time. I only hope it comforts the mothers. If so, there is some point; but they must be very wonderfully constituted if it does.

They bury their dead anywhere they like, more often in the bush, but sometimes at their own doors, and in the evening they often light fires on their graves, so that they may rest quietly, untroubled by evil spirits.

The funeral is accompanied by dancing and singing and wailing, but the celebrations are often put off for some months. In the case of one very rich chief who had from two to three hundred

wives, they were put off for two years; but then the wives gave themselves up to a grand time of screaming and shrieking and grovelling in dust and ashes. It must have been wonderfully comforting to the departed after such apparent forgetfulness.

CHAPTER XVIII

A CORONATION

THE crowning of kings and chiefs is accompanied with all kinds of ceremonies and curious customs. The native constitution is a feudal system. At the head there are paramount chiefs, either kings or queens. There is no Salic law, which is curious, as the natives generally look on their womenkind as something far inferior to themselves, useful beasts of burden, or slaves to be bullied or petted according to the moods and whims of their lord and master.

Some of the women, however, make excellent rulers. One of our most capable paramount chiefs is a woman. All native affairs are brought to her court of justice, and her decisions are very rarely questioned by her subjects.

Then every paramount chief has a certain number of sub-chiefs who are responsible to him for a certain number of towns; and they in their turn have head-men under them, each village, however

small, having its head-man, who is answerable to his chief for the well-being of every family under his charge, and for the payment of five shillings a year for every house. All these different offices last for life, and then are filled by election.

The chiefs are entirely responsible for all native questions. The Government interferes with none of the harmless customs of the country. The only rights the tribes have lost since they fell under the jurisdiction of "The Great White King," are those of making war upon one another, punishments by death and torture, and slave dealing.

Those who have domestic slaves, if they are kind to them, are allowed to keep them, unless they wish themselves to be set free, and their friends or relations are able and willing to pay the regulation fee of £4 for them. £4 frees them, but in most cases they have been brought up as ordinary members of the family, and have no wish to leave their home. Cases of unkind treatment are very few and far between. It was in the slave-dealing days that so much cruelty was mixed up with it all, and those are over.

Dick and I, after a great deal of arranging so as not to arrive before everything was ready, went up to the crowning of a very important black king, but we were too soon. The twentieth-

century bustle has never touched the interior of Africa, and no European can help being too soon. The natives first think about thinking, and then they gradually come to think about doing; but that is within no measurable distance of taking any definite action—that only comes with time, and time with them is much too dignified ever to fly. But I think, without the Commissioners to urge them on their way, it would often mean eternity.

After the chiefs have at last pulled themselves enough together to elect their future king, he is sent right away from the town into the bush, where he is shut up for several weeks or even longer, to prepare for his high calling. One man was kept away for nine months, and in the Timani country, anyway, their duties are instilled into them in a most forcible way. Those responsible for them pay them constant visits, ask them impossible questions, and then in the pidgin-English they talk out here, "larn them plenty sense" by thrashing them most unmercifully. Their shrieks, poor things, while they are thus painfully having wisdom instilled into them, may sometimes be heard right into the town, and the same thing goes on night after night. Once paramount chief, they will be absolutely supreme, and can of

course never be touched ; so the chiefs take care to have it well out of them first, their last and only chance, and the poor wretch is sometimes terribly mauled before receiving his kingly honours.

For a nervous man, it must be anything but pleasing to be elected king. They have to stay in the bush till they are "pulled," which means being fetched out with every honour for their coronation.

They were waiting for the moon to be exactly right when we went up, but the whole place was in a state of the wildest excitement, and dancing and singing and tom-tomming went on without stopping day and night ; but the second or third night we were there the future king was pulled,' and they came to tell Dick the next morning that he was in the town, and would be very glad to see him. He couldn't come to see Dick, as he was still shut up with all the other chiefs, and under the strictest supervision. Dick went up, but soon came back to fetch me, as they had heard I was there, and were dreadfully disappointed when he went up alone. They explained all this to the interpreter, and asked if I might come, as some of them had never seen a white woman before.

We found them all sitting in a large round barn, with mats and coverings of every descrip-

AT THE CORONATION

MENDI WOMEN CARRYING WATER

tion hung round everywhere, so that no one could look in. A curtain was lifted up when we arrived, just to give us room to pass, but closed at once behind us, and we found ourselves in the middle of a very picturesque sight—chiefs in mitres, looking, as I have said before, just like high priests, in beautiful flowing robes, and amulets hanging from chains round their necks, and staffs of office and birch-rods in their hands, symbols of their calling. At their feet their wives were sitting all dressed in white, and gay with bangles and charms of crocodile teeth and small horns. Then at the back of the chiefs all the head-men were standing dressed in their best, too. The central figure of all, the new king, was the only one who wasn't allowed to be dressed properly. He had to wear a dirty old brown penitential robe till his coronation was finished, and when we first went up he still had a few more hours to get through, but at the end he threw off the old dress and was clothed in brilliant new robes quite worthy of his rank.

Chairs were put for us in the very middle of the room facing the king, while every eye in the room drank us in. I wondered what was the proper thing to do; it is very difficult to smile and bow to a crowd of staring but absolutely unresponsive faces. I tried to break the silence by telling the

king I was glad to see him, but it was evidently a grave mistake, as it completely turned his head, and he at once gave me the greatest treasure he possessed—a shilling with a hole in it—and proposed to me, and entreated Dick to give me to him, and not to take me away when he left. He said he would give him anything and everything in exchange, including his wives (it must have been very nice for them to hear all this!), as he loved me very deeply, and had done so from the first minute he had seen me. He had then seen me for about three minutes, which accounted for the violence of his affection. Dick smiled and said it was quite impossible, and an angry murmur against the king arose among the other chiefs. They told him he had done an impossible thing, and given very great offence, as my having come to the coronation was a great honour. He then apologised most ruefully, and was forgiven.

Soon after that we left them to enliven the time with eating and drinking.

The next item on their programme at which they specially asked for my presence was killing a cow, which was done with a great deal of ritual. Funnily enough, I refused the invitation. It is impossible to understand a white woman, to be offered the highest seat of honour, close to the

cow where no detail could be lost, and actually to refuse it. But in the afternoon we went up to the final ceremony of all—the presenting of the king to all his people. It was a wonderful sight; the whole country around was there, swarming on every side of us. Every available inch of ground was black, in the most literal sense, with seething humanity.

Our men ran us up in state in hammocks, and formed up behind us to the right of the king. For the first five minutes after we had all assembled there was dead silence. In all that huge waiting crowd there was no sound or movement, and every face looked more vacant, if possible, than the one on either side of it. The silence at last so palled that Dick asked one of our men if it was all right, or if they were waiting for him to start. But no, it was just as it ought to be; and at last our patience was rewarded by a chief suddenly rising and walking up and down, solemnly waving his birch rod. We had reached the stage when any sign of life was refreshing, and after a time he spoke; but he had only one idea, and although that was the very good one of distributing blessings at intervals on every town and person he could think of, it grew before he had finished far more wearisome than the silence. Between every blessing

he paused, and then suddenly woke up and started again, as if he were beginning a new subject. He did that part of it so well that for the first half of his speech we were taken in again and again, but the last half we had learnt by a bitter experience always to know what was coming; and if we hadn't had great self-control, we should have entreated him to stop and leave the rest to our imagination. But the women clapped their hands slowly and solemnly after each blessing, which encouraged him enormously, and evidently made him think that his forte lay in oratory. I really wonder we aren't still there. Our interpreter almost mesmerised himself to sleep with the constant repetition of the same words. But at last it was over, and when he had been followed by one or two others in much the same strain, Dick had to harangue them eloquently for a few minutes, and the coronation was over. And the poor king, who had been getting sleepier and sleepier, and had hardly heard a word of all that had passed, was released and allowed to go home.

We didn't see him again, for we left next day, and he was evidently too exhausted by all he had gone through to come and see us off. But the tom-tomming and singing and cake-dancing went on with unabated vigour, and we weren't sorry to leave all the noise behind us.

MADAM YOKO'S DANCING GIRLS

Tom-tomming—banging on drums—is the greatest institution in the country. It is impossible for Europeans really to understand what an important part it plays in the life of a native; it appeals to his every mood, stirs him up to the wildest frenzies of joy and comforts his deepest sorrows, welcomes the new-born baby and soothes the dying man, and forms a running, cheering accompaniment to every action in his life.

Nothing to them is quite complete without it. By nature they are very lazy, but tom-tomming can conquer even that. The building of a wall or house strides forward to a drum accompaniment, and your laziest boys, who think themselves ill-used if they can't sleep an hour for every minute they work, will spring to their feet at the sound of a tom-tom and dance different figures of the cake-dance for hour after hour if only they get a chance. The perpetual banging seems to thrill their whole being into a yearning for dancing. The whole place joins in—from baby children who can hardly walk, to toothless old men who go stumbling along in a way which is quite painful to watch. If the noise stops even for a moment the spell is broken, but they generally have several players at work, who keep on even when the perspiration is rolling down their faces.

Every big chief has a head tom-tommer, who on all great occasions has to lead and keep all the foolery going ; and his place is certainly no sinecure, as they generally dance and sing and play all at the same time. They are distinguished by some special dress of feathers and grass, or some equally suitable material.

Our own particular chieftainess has a set of dancing girls she turns on like a musical box whenever she feels inclined, which may be either in broad daylight or in the middle of the night. They dress in knickerbockers, loose grass petticoats, and fishing nets, and wear extraordinary erections on their heads.

Their dancing is really wonderful ; their Bundu bush must certainly have a most skilled mistress. Three boys tom-tom very vigorously for a band, and a good many whitewashed girls in very short petticoats stand round singing. Their whole bodies move, as well as their feet, with the most rhythmical motion, and dance after dance follow one another with astonishing rapidity, and without apparently the least effort. There is no grace about it, but it is very clever, and the faultless rhythm of every step, however intricate, is very fascinating to watch and to hear.

I tried to get a photograph of the chieftainess in

her regal robes. She agreed to put them on, but her temper was not to be depended on, and in the middle of changing she suddenly lost it, and appeared in her old dressing-gown again. She was generally very pleasant to me, but she could be odious, and then she stuck her pipe (which was constantly replenished by one or other of her maidens) into her mouth, and refused to open it again, contenting herself with occasionally grunting.

EPILOGUE

SINCE writing that I have come home again, and it is difficult to realise the other part of my life, which is now being played alone by Dick in Nigeria.

Life in London and in the bush have so little in common, and this English Christmas, surrounded by friends, is extraordinarily different to other Christmasses we have spent in the interior of Borneo and the wilds of Africa, days and even weeks away from the nearest white face. Last Christmas we were in a lovely village, right up in the interior of Africa, with an old chief who was a great humbug; but I am not inclined to dwell on that, as he had built us a most fascinating bungalow, the greater part of which was just an open shady verandah, and—luxury of luxuries—a wooden floor. No one knows what that means till they have tried living week after week in mud huts, with no furniture and nowhere to put anything, except perhaps a freshly-manured floor. We enjoyed ourselves very much; but it is certainly a relief

sometimes, when Dick is at home too, to be in a country where the scenery may not be so beautiful, but where a loaded revolver, always within reach, is not a necessity. But of all things a Sunday abroad stands out in most striking contrast to a Sunday at home. Here in England, whether in town or country, there is no chance of missing Sunday altogether, and everyone celebrates it in some way, either with extra work or extra pleasure or extra rest; but in the bush all the seven days are alike. Work goes on on Sundays the same as weekdays. Of course, I mean up in the interior, not where Government stations and any kind of church exists; in that case the one shuts and the other opens.

It is wonderful the different phases of religion you see when you are travelling — everyone working for the same end, and yet no two places ever using the same methods, and many of them unfortunately feeling most bitter to those who dare to think differently from their own, perhaps devoted, but extraordinarily narrow creed. That kind of feeling must be so very confusing to a native's mind, if he has begun to grasp even the most rudimentary elements of real Christianity.

Sometimes, certainly, we seemed to agree to drop our differences. I was asked one Sunday on board

ship to play Ancient and Modern Hymns for a service taken by the head of the American Baptist Church—a dear old man, very charitable and kind, who didn't for a moment try to make out we were all necessarily going to the bad because we were on our way to the West Coast. We were a very large and extraordinarily varied congregation of every communion and sect, no two opinions probably quite agreeing. On the seat opposite to me were two Anglican Church, one Roman Church, and three very extreme Faith-healers, who groaned audibly from time to time as if they were in very bad pain.

The next Sunday we were up in the interior, and I was asked by a friend of ours, the priest in charge, to play at mass. Our congregation there was entirely black. The Sunday after, or rather the next Saturday night, we had arrived in the Mahometan region, and we had just settled in for the night, when they started a very impressive service in the open court house joining on to our verandah. It consisted for the most part in solemn chants, which were most beautiful, as the men all took parts, and I have never heard more perfect harmony. But I must encroach no longer on your time, though before I stop I would like to ask those who have relations in far-off lands to

write to them more often, and not to feel that a foreign letter must necessarily be a far greater undertaking than an ordinary letter at home, and so a thing to be dreaded and put off from week to week till there is something important to say. The merest scrap would do good they little dream of, and the want of it is often more crushingly disappointing than it is possible for anyone living under such totally different conditions as we do at home to realise. I speak with feeling, though letters, I am grateful to say, poured in on me; but even I never had as many as I wanted. And yet I felt ashamed of my good luck when other people, men who had been equally longing for the mail, saw it arrive with nothing for them. You will think it foolish, perhaps, to try to make a tragedy over such trivialities, but out there it is no triviality. I speak from many years' experience. You may think your own special relations don't care about letters. They perhaps didn't in England, but they hadn't then tried being divided from all their people by a few odd thousand miles of sea, and a few weeks of land added on to that; and they hadn't then spent month after month, many of them totally alone, with a fortnightly mail-carrier from headquarters their only link with the outer world. They count the hours till the mail arrives,

and hail the carrier as their best friend, to find what, inside his bag? Nothing but a few blue forms, a few red-tapey notes, little to do with any point, and a request to explain some small detail which was already patent! Can't people at home realise how crushing a mail like this is? I have never yet seen any man who didn't jump at a letter from home; and if there are any out there who have no home, they must have distant cousins many times removed, or friends who could occasionally show them that someone in England cares whether they are dead or living. The climate is depressing enough without unnecessary disappointments, and if people in England only realised a hundredth part of the good a letter from home does, especially after a go of fever, which on the West Coast is unfortunately a very common incident in men's lives, they would, I know, write oftener, even if their only news is that they have nothing to say.

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